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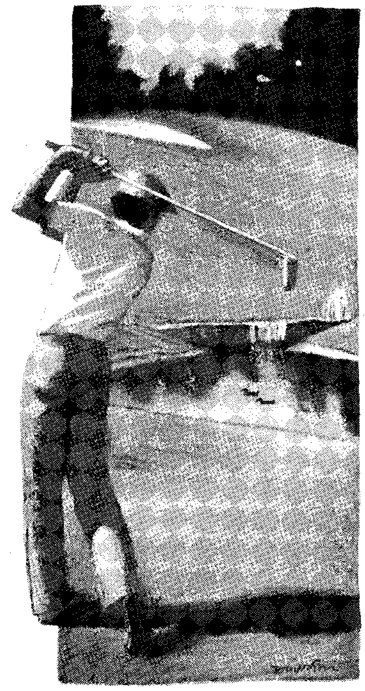

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEBRUARY 25, 1991

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 4
THE TALK OF THE TOWN 27
"WOMEN OF THE WILDERNESS" . . . . *Roz Chast* 32
"FARRELL'S CADDIE" . . . . *John Updike* 33
"THREE POEMS" . . . . *Zbigniew Herbert* 36
"OLD FLAME" . . . . *William Trevor* 37
ANNALS OF ENTERPRISE (HOT METAL—PART I) . . . . *Richard Preston* 43
"ON THE OLD WAY" (POEM) . . . . *W. S. Merwin* 62
AMERICAN CHRONICLES ("WHY DO FOOLS FALL IN LOVE?") . . . . *Calvin Trillin* 72
THE THEATRE . . . . *Edith Oliver, Mimi Kramer* 82
MUSICAL EVENTS . . . . *Andrew Porter* 84
THE CURRENT CINEMA . . . . *Terrence Rafferty* 87
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON . . . . *Elizabeth Drew* 90
A CRITIC AT LARGE (AUDUBON) . . . . *Adam Gopnik* 96

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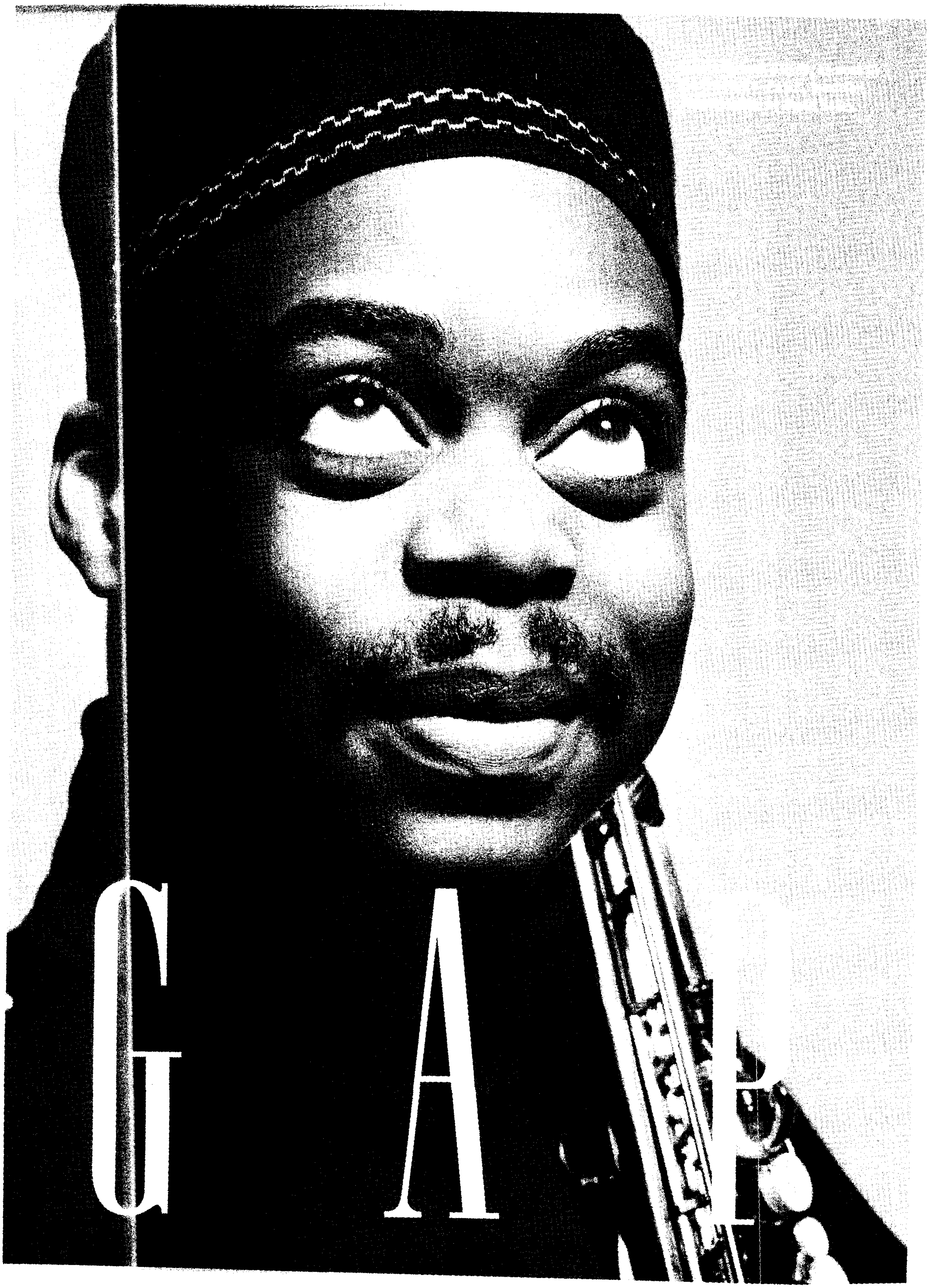
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

ONE of the theatre's few enduring truths—right up there with the fact that a gun on the wall in Act I will get fired in Act II—is that a play about grief will show loved ones sorting through the affairs of the departed. It's a device especially common to plays about AIDS. (Harvey Fierstein's "On Tidy Endings" may have pioneered the usage.) In the words of Andrew Holleran, the most lyrical and tireless writer about the epidemic, sorting uncovers "the archeological evidence of a life."

The opening-scene sifters in "An Unfinished Song," a musical by James J. Mellon at the Provincetown, are mourning a gay friend who died of bone cancer, not AIDS, but the playwright reminds us of this fact so often that one of his points gets blunted. It's a shame, because the point—that losses unrelated to AIDS can be no less painful than those that are so linked—is a valuable one. With a sharper conception in this regard, Mr. Mellon's project might have been the first real "post-AIDS" musical.

The muddle is a shame for another reason: the show's cast—playing a post-"Company" collection of New York types—is a good one. In a series of extended flashbacks, Ken Land invests the afflicted friend, Mort, with a fierce and affecting anger. As his lover Worth, a young Waspish attorney who advances professionally and moves on, Aloysius Gigl is blond, handsome, and emotionally a mess (in other words, he's perfect). The show's other couple, Debbie and Brad, are much less interesting, but the actors who play them do what they can: Joanna Glushak has a fetching off-the-wall number dressed in a Madonna-like bustier from which bride and groom dolls dangle; and Robert Lambert—who in April may reprise his show-stopping turn as Tulsa in Arthur Laurents's "Gypsy" revival—has that unbottleable quality, charm. The highest laurels, however, must go to Beth Leavel. Portraying the only friend of Mort's who doesn't skip town, Miss Leavel has a winning way with both a ballad and a wisecrack. That an actress this good will work again is another truth that hasn't—we hope—yet eroded.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

The Big Love—Tracey Ullman stars in a comedy by Brooke Allen and Jay Presson Allen. It is based on Florence Aadland and Tedd Thomey's 1961 book about an affair that Aadland's teen-age daughter had with Errol Flynn. Previews begin Feb. 21. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Candida—Laurie Kennedy has the title role in this production of Shaw's play. Presented by the Riverside Shakespeare Company. Preview on Feb. 20. Opens Feb. 21 at 8. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Circle Repertory Company—Jon Polito and Peter Riegert star in **Road to Nirvana**, a satire by Arthur Kopit. In previews. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

A Fierce Attachment—Tovah Feldshuh in a one-woman play written by Edward M. Cohen and based on Vivian Gornick's memoir of the same name. In previews. (Jewish Repertory Theatre, 344 E. 14th St. 505-2667.)

Henry IV, Parts I and II—The sixteenth and seventeenth plays in the Public's Shakespeare Marathon, both directed by JoAnne Akalaitis, will run in repertory through March 31. Part I opens Feb. 26 at 6:30; Part II opens Feb. 27 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Life During Wartime—A dark comedy by Keith Reddin, which had its première last year at the La Jolla Playhouse, in San Diego. The cast includes Leslie Lyles, Bruce Norris, W. H. Macy, and Welker White. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Lost in Yonkers—Neil Simon's new play, with Irene Worth, Mercedes Ruehl, and Kevin Spacey; directed by Gene Saks. Previews Feb. 18-20. Opens Feb. 21 at 6:30. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

The Speed of Darkness—Len Cariou and Stephen Lang have the leads in a play by Steve Tesich. Directed by Robert Falls. In previews. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Taking Steps—A 1979 comedy by the British playwright Alan Ayckbourn. With Christopher Benjamin, Bill Buell, Jonathan Hogan, Spike McClure, Pippa Pearthree, and Jane Summerhays; directed by Alan Strachan. Preview on Feb. 19. Opens Feb. 20 at 6:45. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

RECENTLY OPENED

Absent Friends—A 1975 comedy by Alan Ayckbourn. Lynne Meadow directed. Gillian Anderson, Brenda Blethyn, John Curless, Peter Frechette, Ellen Parker, and David Purdham make up the cast. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

La Bête—Tom McGowan stars in this comedy by David Hirson, which is written entirely in verse. Richard Jones directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.)

Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story—Anyone who thinks that rock and roll lives on had better steer clear of this ersatz docu-musical about the life of Buddy Holly. (11/19/90) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Camille, A Tearjerker—Everett Quinton and the late Charles Ludlam are both at their best in this revival of Mr. Ludlam's 1973 spoof, which gives Mr. Quinton a chance to "play the whore" on a grand scale. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271. Closes March 3.)

Carreño—A show based on the life of Teresa Carreño, the Venezuelan composer, pianist, conductor, and singer. Written and performed by Pamela Ross and directed by Gene Frankel. Most performances are in English; a few are in Spanish. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Daugherty & Field Off-Broadway—The cabaret team of Bill Daugherty and Robin Field in a revue of swing and show tunes. (Double Image, 15 Vandam St. 924-1120.)

Earth and Sky—This modest thriller, by Douglas Post, in which a poet decides to investigate the murder of her lover, is nicely written and is acted with style, under the direction of André Ernotte. Jennifer Van Dyck, as the heroine, and Michael Genet, as a hip bartender, are especially good. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes Feb. 24.)

Fiddler on the Roof—The Israeli actor Topol makes a commanding Tevye—the best of all of them—in this production, which falls somewhere between revival and facsimile. The songs are by Bock and Harnick; the dances and direction are re-created from the Jerome Robbins originals; and the costumes are from the Patricia Zipprodt originals. (12/3/90) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.)

In Miami as It Is in Heaven—A play by Raul de Cárdenas. Three performances a week are in English, and four are in Spanish. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293. Closes Feb. 24.)

Jackie Mason: Brand New—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Let Me Live—OyamO's dynamic, poetic play is set in a jail in Georgia in 1932, and its hero is a black labor organizer, wrongly convicted, who is determined to get out. Randy Frazier heads the excellent company, which was directed by Bill Mitchelson. Music composed and directed by Olu Dara. (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Light Shining in Buckinghamshire—A 1976 play by Caryl Churchill, presented by New York Theatre Workshop. (Closes March 10.) Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 279-4200.)

Lyndon—Lyndon Johnson, in the person of Laurence Luckinbill, wanders around the Oval Office reviewing (and justifying) his political career. He is convincing most of the time, both dramatically and historically, and this one-man show is more interesting than most. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Closes March 3.)

Mambo Mouth—John Leguizamo's one-man show, in which he portrays seven Hispanic characters. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

Manhattan Punch Line—Presenting a festival of new one-act comedies. Program A: "Variations on the Death of Trotsky," by David Ives; "Gorgo's Mother," by Laurence Klavan; "Gangster Apparel," by Richard Vetere; and "Stay Carl Stay," by Peter Tolan. . . . ¶ Program B: "The Experts," by Bill Bozzone; "Foreplay," by David Ives; "The Staged Reading," by Michael Panes; "Mailman," by Matthew Carnahan; and "The Christmas Rules," by Craig Wright. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes March 10.)

Monster in a Box—Spalding Gray's latest autobiographical monologue. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes Feb. 25.)

Mule Bone—The première of a never-produced 1930 collaboration between Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes. Directed by Michael Schultz. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Once on This Island—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Remembrance—A play by Graham Reid. (Irish Arts Theatre, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

Romeo and Juliet—A brawling, rackety production in which many of the words go by the board and many of the characters are blurred. Exceptions must be made of Miriam Healy-Louie, a true Juliet, who is fresh, beautiful, ardent, and funny, and of Lynnda Ferguson as Lady Capulet, Peggy Pope as the nurse, and Omar Carter as Benvolio. The

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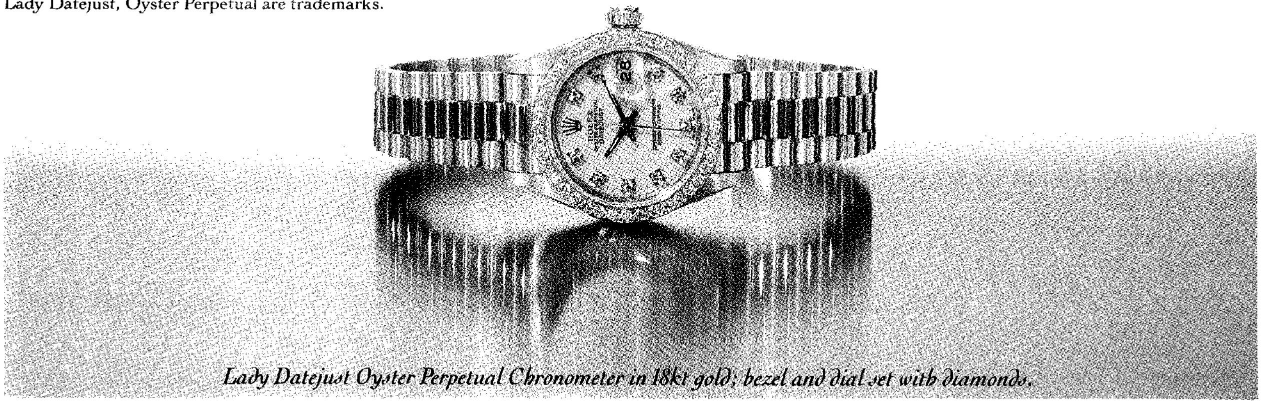

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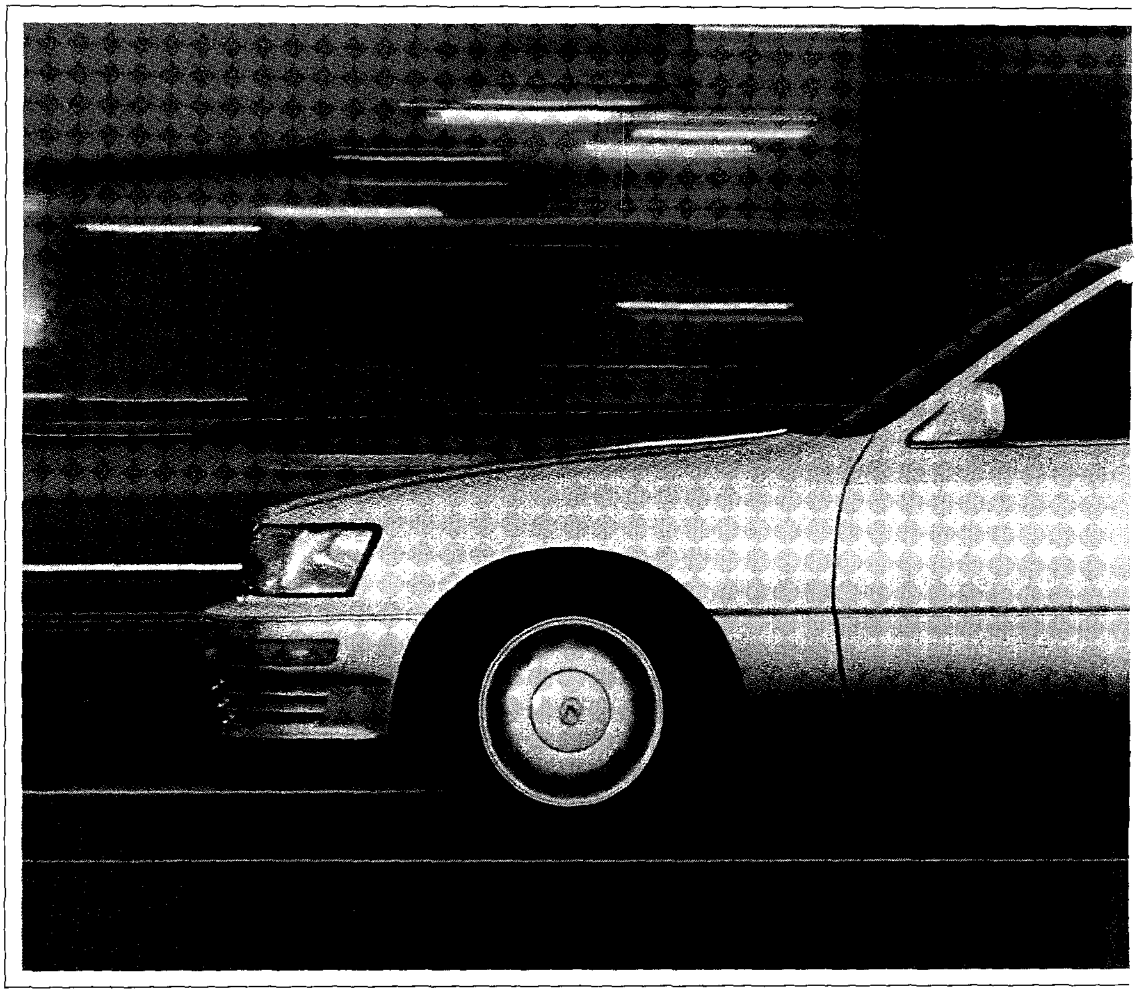

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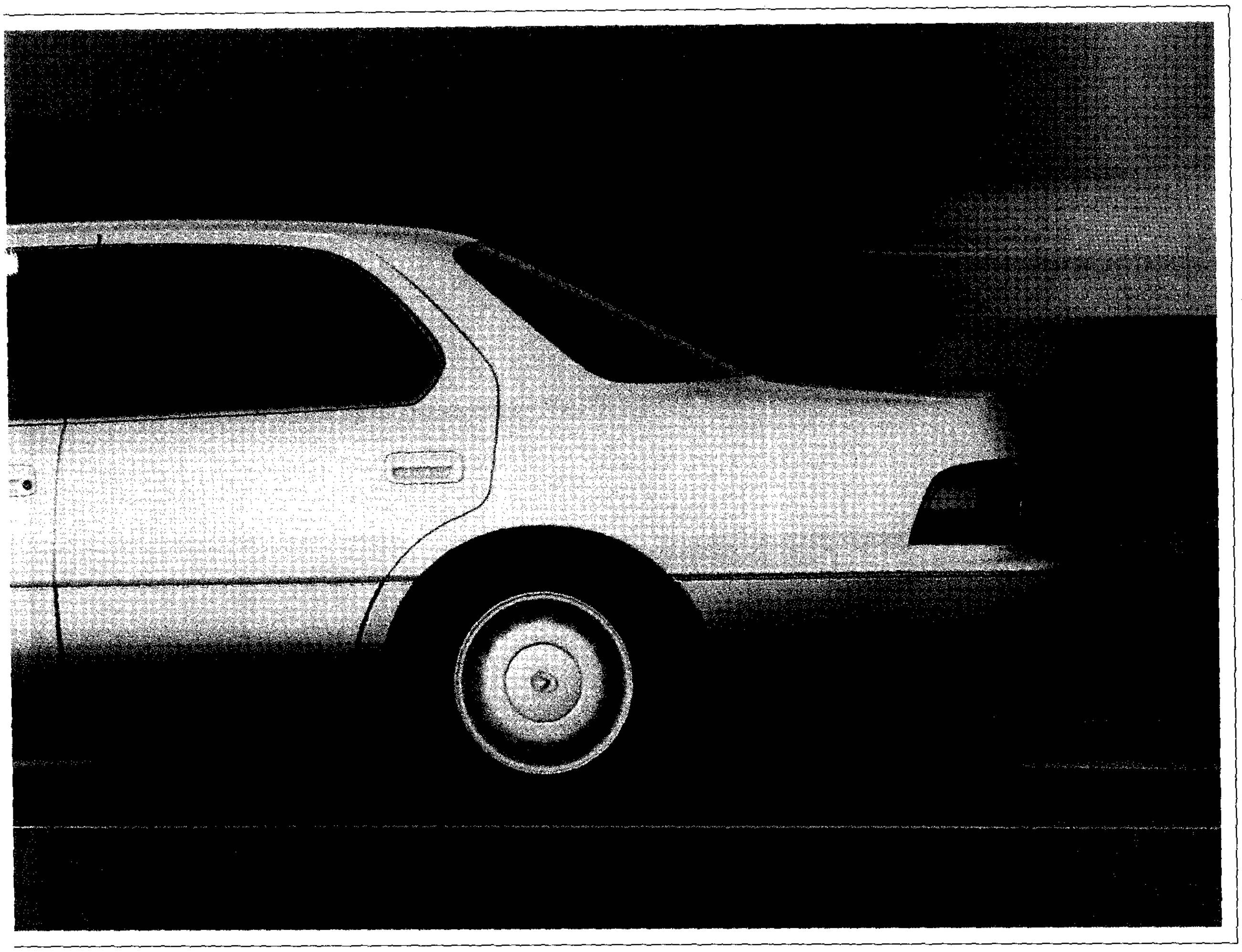

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misbegotten performance was directed by Bill Alexander, on temporary loan from the Royal Shakespeare Company. (Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes March 3.)

Shadowlands—William Nicholson's vulgar stage adaptation of the beautiful television film about C. S. Lewis that he wrote for the BBC is essentially a tourist trap. It Broadwayizes everything that in the movie was subtle or sincere. Directed by Elijah Moshinsky; with Nigel Hawthorne and Jane Alexander. (11/26/90) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)

Six Degrees of Separation—You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (6/25/90) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Sum of Us—David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed, but cast and direction are both excellent. (11/5/90) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Those Were the Days—One could almost wish that this tribute to the Yiddish musical theatre, directed and choreographed by Eleanor Reissa, were less assimilated—stricter in its concept and selection (witness the title song, which has nothing to do with the Yiddish musical theatre). But the charming and adept performances of Bruce Adler, Robert Abelson, Mina Bern, and Lori Wilner, together with Zalmen Mlotek's klezmer music, make the show a joyful celebration of the shtetl culture, and put it among the very best of its kind. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302. Closes Feb. 24.)

An Unfinished Song—A musical with a book, a score, and lyrics by James J. Mellon. Directed by Simon Levy. (Provincetown, 133 Macdougal St. 477-5048.)

LONG RUNS

aspects of love: Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cars or trains) but ends up being a monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **cats:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **city of angels:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.) . . . **the fantasticks:** The longest-running long run will celebrate its thirty-first birthday in May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **forbidden broadway 1991:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **forever plaid:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.) . . . **grand hotel:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **les misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **other people's money:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **the phantom of the opera:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **prelude to a kiss:** Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.) . . . **the rothschilds:** The 1970 musical by Jerry Bock, Sheldon Harnick, and Sherman Yellen. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.) . . . **smoke on the mountain:** This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray, it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

DANCE

"THE summer sky of New York . . . is as magnificent as the sky of Venice. Do you see all this?" The words come from Edwin Denby's essay "Dancers, Buildings, and People in the Streets." He continues, "Do you see what a forty- or sixty-story building looks like from straight below? And do you see how it comes up from the sidewalk as if it intended to go up no more than five stories? . . . As for myself, I wouldn't have seen such things if I hadn't seen them first in the photographs of Rudy Burckhardt." In 1951, Denby published this essay on the difference between looking at life and looking at art. Since that time, Mr. Burckhardt has remained on the job, taking photographs, making films, and generally educating the eyes of several generations of artists and audiences. He has also travelled widely, and his films of people around the world, walking, gesturing, and interacting with one another, continue to be pertinent and absorbing documents for anyone concerned with the origins of physical expression.

Recently, Mr. Burckhardt showed some of these films about walking as part of a lecture series at the Municipal Art Society called "Street Meets Artist: The Intersection of Urbanism and Contemporary Culture." We saw irrepressible Neapolitans from 1951. We saw aloof, long-striding Haitians, stony Peruvians, and busy Hong Kong pedestrians—all from the nineteen-seventies—and breakneck Manhattan crowds from several decades. The ways in which two human beings, separated by time and place, could plant one foot in front of the other were dramatically different. The New Yorkers were the most spectacular of all—intensely focussed, cutting every step, yet fluidly alive with complex social cues and understated revelations of feeling. Is there an analogous New York style of dance? Some dancers think so. "I've always felt that my work is very dense, layered, pretty crowded," said Bebe Miller, a young choreographer and native New Yorker, during another lecture in the series. "In New York we grow used to a lot of stimulus. It's very hard for me to sit still in dance."

The "Street Meets Artist" series runs into May. The next program takes place at the Society (457 Madison Avenue) on February 24 and is called "Sidewalks of New York: For and Against the Street in the Movies of the 1930s."

Nov. 7, 1964
THE NEW YORKER
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New York City Ballet—Final performances of the season. Feb. 19 at 8: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ Feb. 20 at 8: "La Source," "Ives, Songs," and "La Valse." . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Tarantella," "La Source," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 8: "Waltz Trilogy," "Ives, Songs," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 2: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Ives, Songs," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 1: "Waltz Trilogy," "Kammermusik No. 2," "Quiet City," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 7: "Serenade," "Eight More," "Brahms/Handel," and the premières of three pas de deux by company dancers. (A benefit for the Dancers' Emergency Fund.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Joffrey Ballet—Opening performances of a three-week engagement, which will run through March 17. Feb. 26 at 7:30: "Suite Saint-Saëns," "Sea Shadow," "Tarantella," and "The Green Table." . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 8: "Cotillon," "Lacrymosa" (New York première), "L'Air d'Esprit," and "Trinity." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Feld Ballets/NY—Feb. 19 at 8: "Ah Scarlatti," "Charmed Lives," "Ion," and "Common Ground." . . . ¶ Feb. 20 and Feb. 22 at 8: "Consort," "Charmed Lives," "Ion," and "Intermezzo No. 1." . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 8: "Contra Pose," "Fauna," "Kore," and "Savage Glance." . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 8: "Contra Pose," "At Midnight," and "Embraced Waltzes." . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 2: "A Footstep of Air," "Savage Glance," and "Skara Brae." . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 7:30: "Ah Scarlatti," "Fauna," "Shadow's Breath," and "The Jig Is Up." . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 8: "Common Ground," "Savage Glance," "Ion," and "Fauna." . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 8: "Contra Pose," "Fauna," "Kore," and "Skara Brae." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through March 10.)

Gallman's Newark Dance Theatre—Presenting works by Talley Beatty, Fred Benjamin, and Alfred Gallman. (Theatre of the Riverside Church, W. 120th St. and Riverside Dr. 864-2929. Feb. 20-22 at 8.)

Pat Hall-Smith—In "Silent Echoes," a full-length work incorporating video, which was created in collaboration with Mara Alper. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Feb. 21-23 at 8 and Feb. 24 at 3.)

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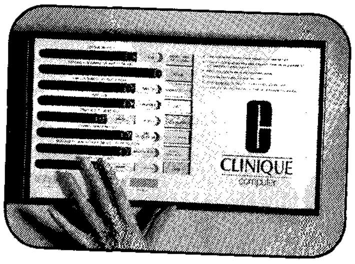

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NIGHT LIFE

FOR a long time, we thought the Stone Roses were *the only* Manchester band we'd ever need. The pyschedelia revival that they unwittingly inspired—and clearly wanted no part of—seemed to have been dreamed up for magazine feature writers. Suddenly, there were half a dozen cocky, sixties-minded dance bands, all of whom wore bell-bottoms, took Ecstasy, worshipped at the Hammond organ, and thought that they were the only thing that had happened to the British music scene since the Sex Pistols. Well, the Stone Roses *still* haven't come out with a record since their 1989 début, and, curiosity having got the better of us, we finally checked out some of their competition.

The first thing you notice when you start dipping into the "Manchester Sound" is that a lot of groups sound suspiciously like the Stone Roses. (Most of the band members are barely into their twenties and can't look as far back as the sixties for inspiration.) Some of them, though, are awfully good. The Charlatans UK, who'll be performing at the Ritz on February 28, play swirling, atmospheric grooves that are full of *waca-waca* guitar work and enough organ for a Spencer Davis Group record or a day at the skating rink. Singer Tim Burgess has a rather thin, nasal voice that sometimes gets lost in the shuffle, but the Charlatans' radio-ready début album has been topping the college charts on and off for months.

Inspiral Carpets, who'll be at the Marquee on March 14, are simply a knockout, and their first full-length release, "Life," has taken up more or less permanent residence in our compact disk player. Like their fellow revivalists, the group works in wheeling organ solos and sixties-ish *ah-Ah-AH* backing vocals. The best point of reference for Inspiral Carpets, though, is probably the Jam. Tom Hingley sings more like Paul Weller than Paul Weller does—he gets the same pissed-off warble in his voice and he retraces some of Weller's melodies—but, more important, something seems to be at stake in his band's songs. Youthful swagger is fine, but you can only listen to the Stone Roses sing "I Wanna Be Adored" so many times.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Singer **JEFF HARNAR,** who's currently offering two new shows in the woody nook known as the Oak Room, has been known to sing one number with a quiet, gentle lilt, then drop his voice down low and belt out the next with a vibrato that could shake a diploma off a wall. His performances usually include just the right amount of bad jokes and over-the-top theatrics, as well as some nice musical surprises. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen, Harnar dedicates his shows to the "1959 Broadway Songbook." (He was born that year.) Fridays and Saturdays at eleven-fifteen, he sings Cole Porter. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—The Ballroom's recent Brazilian festival turned out to be something of a logistical nightmare—the cabaret had a heck of a time trying to get visas for its performers and ended up cancelling a few much awaited engagements, including one by Margareth Menezes. (Other clubs engaged in Brazil fests avoided red tape by booking only expatriates.) Now things at the Ballroom seem to have calmed down again, chiefly because the club is featuring stateside talents. **GROUP FIVE,** which is appearing here through Feb. 23, is a vocal quintet. Its various members have been heard singing "I Love New York," as well as jingles for Coke, McDonald's, Sara Lee, and Meow Mix. Here the group has turned its attention to jazz and is working with an instrumental quartet. The wonderfully campy singer-accordionist **PHOEBE LÉGÈRE,** who starts up on Feb. 26, with a program of Porter, Coward, Piaf, and Brel, describes her new show as an "upbeat, happy, dazzling concept show with sequins, feathers, tap dancing, and emotion."

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour (there's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak). It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up well in advance. The **EGBERTO GISMONTI** quintet and **HERMETO PASCOAL** are on hand Feb. 19-24; the **ELIANE ELIAS** trio and **JOYCE** and her quartet swap sets the week beginning Feb. 26. First set at nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The walls and columns are basic black with some rainbow detailing here and there—the place looks a little like the outside of a van. If you end up without a seat, you can stand at the bar and mull over photographs from great shows you've missed. The Lubbock, Texas, country-rocker **JOE ELY** will be here on Feb. 19, along with **TREAT HER RIGHT.** Feb. 20-21 belongs to the **RADIATORS,** and the Eighth Annual "Fast Folk Revue," featuring a gaggle of folkies, takes place Feb. 22-23. Shows nightly at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

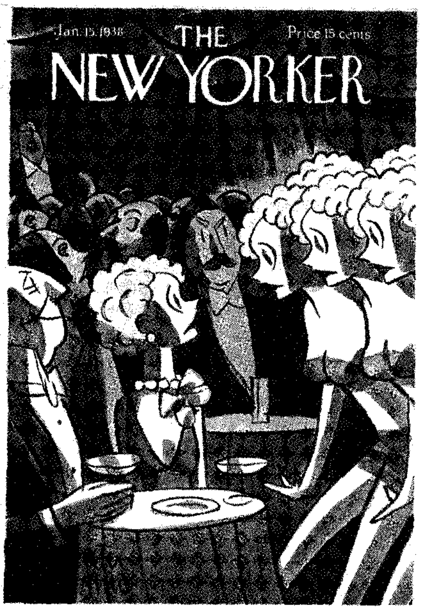
Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar in the heart of N.Y.U. country. It's advisable to get all your talking done between sets, because once the first chord is struck, the audience here—with a little help from the management—becomes as quiet as a church congregation. The fine young trumpeter **ROY HARGROVE** leads a trio through Feb. 23; saxophonist **CHICO FREEMAN** heads up a trio of his own on Feb. 24. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—An unpretentious storefront café devoted to such things as Irish stew and the *Irish Times*. There's no stage per se, but bohemian musicians gather around a piano and work up some wistful sets while bohemian patrons sit writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over one of the two varieties of beer sold here: Budweiser and Rolling Rock. Sin-é means "that's it" in Gaelic and is *not* Sinéad O'Connor's nickname. The café is a nice place to while away an hour, and you never know who'll turn up and tune up. Music generally begins at about eight-thirty.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, three walls of Vertès murals, and the coolly elegant **KAREN AKERS,** who's singing a program of musical-theatre numbers, as well as standards by Rodgers and Hart, Bernstein, and Sondheim. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **KURT WIETING** presides from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by metalheads, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. An older couple glides across the floor at an easy pace; an eager young man, his tie loosened, his face perspiring, throws his date around like a crazed cossack. The **HARLEM BLUES AND JAZZ BAND** is in charge of things Feb. 24. Music from eight to midnight.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—A snug, candlelit catacomb just east of Union Square. Singer **CHRIS CONNOR** performs with a trio Feb. 19-24; **RICHARD (GROOVE) HOLMES** and **JIMMY WITHERSPOON** start work on Feb. 26. Music after nine.



Continental Divide, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, posers, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. The motif is prehistoric punk—a Stone Age mural, assorted toy dinosaurs and pterodactyls—and on peak nights there's a "take no prisoners" atmosphere. **DEE DEE RAMONE,** who holds down bass duties for New York's longest-running punk band, leads his own outfit here on Feb. 22. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at ten, Fridays at midnight, and Saturdays at eleven.

Delta 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A tin-roofed, hubcap-awninged, soul-food-serving chicken-shack theme bar. Exhibits include a rusted Orange Crush sign, a Pat Boone record jacket, bottle caps spelling out "Welcome," and other peckerwood flotsam. (If this place weren't a restaurant, it could be a flea market.) The clientele is mainly Northern urban. There's live music most nights, including gospel on Mondays, and zydeco, R. & B., and other stuff the rest of the week. Shows after nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

Eagle Tavern, 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—An Irish pub in the meat-packing district, not too far from the boondocks. In the front room, barbirds study the TV and growl about one thing or another, and in the back room another crowd listens to Irish folk musicians (on Fridays) and native string bands (on Saturdays).

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt. It's not the place for those with a fear of intimacy: at the front tables you can go eye to eye with your favorite performers, and no matter where you're seated there's not much room to practice your T'ai Chi. **CHARLIE BYRD,** who leads a trio Feb. 19-24, studied classical guitar with Segovia in the fifties and then turned his attention toward jazz; he recorded the Latin-jazz classic "Jazz Samba" with Stan Getz in 1962, and later worked with a trio including Barney Kessel and Herb Ellis. **JON HENDRICKS AND COMPANY** begin a visit on Feb. 26. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—At this posh-looking two-floor Chinese restaurant, tucked into a midtown skyscraper, you'll find a lot of business types and a lot of hanging plants. In the middle of the main dining room, you'll also find a Steinway grand, which belongs to hard-swinging Cape Codder **DAVE MC KENNA** Feb. 19-24. Pianist **HERMAN FOSTER** and bass man **JON BURR** commence on Feb. 26. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

Indigo Blues, 221 W. 46th St. (221-0033)—A sleek, modern jazz club, in the basement of the Hotel Edison, with glass brick, space-age carpeting, and long strips of cool-blue neon. The **AVERAGE WHITE BAND** performs Feb. 22-23; the **MICHAEL LEWIS QUARTET** comes in on Feb. 24. Music begins at nine.

Kilimanjaro, 531 W. 19th St. (627-2333)—From the outside, this club, which is housed in a long, low brick building in deserted far-west Chelsea, looks like either a bowling alley or an automobile showroom, but inside you'll find all sorts of African music, as well as calypso, reggae, and other world-beat idioms. On Feb. 22, there's a program called Uptownship Jazz, whose most prominent participant is the pop-jazz trumpeter **HUGH MASEKELA**. The West Indian soca (soul-calypso) star **ARROW** performs on Feb. 23. Shows get started at eleven-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. The **KLEZMATICS**, local practitioners of traditional Eastern European Yiddish music, perform on Feb. 20. **YO LA TENGO**, a Hoboken group, headlines on Feb. 23. In concert, the group is unpredictable: they may lean toward the acoustic material of their latest album, or they may opt for the more chaotic, high-voltage stuff from their earlier days. Music after nine.

Marquee, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club just off the West Side Highway (and no relation to the famed London venue). The **REMBRANDTS**, who'll be here on Feb. 19, are Danny Wilde and Phil Solem, formerly of the obscure New Wave act Great Buildings. As the Rembrandts, they've released one hooky, harmony-heavy album of sixties-tinged pop.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes—has more of a country-club feel. The **GEORGE SHEARING** quartet, which, apart from the brilliant, British-born pianist, includes bassist **NEIL SWAINSON**, drummer **GRADY TATE**, and vibist **DON THOMPSON**, finishes up on Feb. 23. They are performing material from the repertoire of Shearing's original quintet. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A great, pricey cabaret in the sky. **ROSEMARY CLOONEY** is currently on hand. Ms. Clooney, who took a long hiatus after her "White Christmas" days, signed with Concord in the late seventies and has since put out fourteen records. Many of them are tribute albums devoted to American popular-song luminaries; the most recent one takes on Rodgers, Hart, and Hammerstein. Shows from nine. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to Howie Wyeth's ragtime trio, Tuesdays to **VINCE GIORDANO'S** ensemble, Wednesdays to Stan Rubin's band, Fridays to the Tigertown Five Plus Two, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell's group. Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—There's usually a good reason to go to the Ritz, but there's almost always a better reason to stay away. Even leaving aside its midtown address—the sort of neighborhood you wake up in after you've been kidnapped—there's still the club's distressing pack-them-in, get-them-the-hell-out management tactics, and the fact that the atmosphere here, on any given night, is something between those of a high-school gym class and a police state. You can catch Slaughter here on Feb. 23 at nine.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Known for, among countless other things, a scene in "Manhattan" in which Woody Allen tries to teach his young son how to "score." Last fall, after a long slumber, the Tea Room's small, red-gold-and-green cabaret reopened with a series of performances. **WISE GUYS**, a young vocal group out of Texas, performs on Feb. 24 at eight-thirty and, depending on demand, at ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A big, cheerful room, painted a light tropical blue, where you can pick 'em up and set 'em down to sounds from Brazil, Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Ample seating for the contemplative. The willowy, satin-voiced Brazilian singer **ASTRUD GILBERTO**, who keeps her audiences happy by continuing to perform "The Girl from Ipanema," appears Feb. 20-21. The **TABOU COMBO SUPERSTARS**, a Haitian group, are here on Feb. 23. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. The ever-peppy cornettist **NAT ADDERLEY** brings in his sextet Feb. 19-24. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter Miles Evans is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Time Café, 380 Lafayette St., entrance on Great Jones St. (533-7000)—The café's subterranean jazz annex—located around the block on a chunk of real estate that's temporarily safe from the encroachment of Tower Industries—is a newcomer to New York's night life. Time Café is an airy, convivial place with some comfy, diner-style booths, a fleet of IKEA-style tables and chairs, and jazz musicians on the bandstand every Friday and Saturday, beginning at ten.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the gym-size downstairs room—which, with its black walls, black pillars, and black pipes and ducts, resembles a live-in Nevelson sculpture—bluesman **SON SEALS** and his outfit hold forth Feb. 22-23. . . . ¶ Two flights up, at the Top of the Gate, the **TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI** and **LEW TABACKIN** big band works out on Mondays.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." The resourceful guitarist **BILL FRISELL** leads a quartet through Feb. 24; the **HARPER BROTHERS** begin work on Feb. 26. A big band formerly led by the late Mel Lewis holds sway on Mondays. Music after ten.

RECAPPED

For the past several years, the first impression that Manhattan imposed on visitors arriving via the Harlem River Drive was a mournful one: the sight of the Highbridge Aqueduct Tower, a skinny, octagonal, circa-1872 granite spire perched on a cliff above the river at 174th Street, which lost its conical copper cap to a fire in 1984 and so seemed to have been guillotined. Erected to improve local water pressure—water pumped up to a forty-seven-thousand-gallon tank near its hundred-and-ninety-eight-foot-high peak gave plumbing some gravitational oomph—it had been shut down in 1949. Years later, squatters moved in and caused the blaze. But the tower has recently been resurrected, and among the many parties responsible for the project are the architects at William A. Hall Partnership; the waterproofers of Vim Waterproofing; and Campbellsville Industries, a.k.a. the Steeple People. A fresh double-tiered belfry was hoisted onto the building last year, and, inside the new space, speakers were installed that will eventually spew electronic Christmas carols across Highbridge Park and into Washington Heights. You cannot enter the tower, except during infrequent guided tours conducted by the Parks Department, but you can stand at its arched front door, which bears rivets the size of Ping-Pong balls and a tough lock, and which may make you think of Rapunzel's unsatisfied suitors.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

February is the official start of winter in New York, and May 1 is the end. This means that intrepid nocturnals are collectively suffering the first serious epidemic of the season—cabin fever. When they do go out, no matter where they go out, everything is subtext. For those who are not quite clear about the nature of subtext, take the word itself, then eliminate the second, third, fourth, and seventh letters. What you have left is the subtext.

—At the Liz Smith/Iris Love Dachshund Party for the Westminster Dog Show at LauraBelle, a young lady had her sleeping baby Chihuahua tucked neatly inside her jacket against her breast so that the poochette's head barely emerged. With her head bent, obscuring the dog even further, she nuzzled it and whispered to it in goo-goo talk. "His name is Gomez, and I wouldn't go anywhere without him," she said to an acquaintance. Two young rakes walked by and heard her, prompting one to ask, "I wonder what she calls the other one?"

—Seated behind us at the Angelika Film Center, two bundled-up women were chomping on their goodies while waiting for the 6:45 P.M. showing of "Vincent & Theo" to start.

"What's your memory of the prizes in Cracker Jacks?"

"Three-dimensional."

(A long pause, during which two handsome young men made their way past them to seats down the aisle.)

"What's your memory of the first date you ever had at the movies?"

"Three-dimensional."

—Overheard at Tatou just before the start of amateur night:

She: "Why do you keep looking at the door? Who're you waiting for?"

He: "You'll never guess."

She: You mean *he* called?!" (Long pause after no response.) "You mean *she* called?!"

And you thought it was all just idle chitchat.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

John Kelly & Company—In "Maybe It's Cold Outside," a performance work about five people playing games inside a dormitory. With Mr. Kelly, Kyle De Camp, Marleen Menard, Byron Suber, and Vivian Trimble. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Feb. 20-23 at 8:30 and Feb. 24 at 3 and 8:30.)

"Belle Reprieve"—An in-drag, musical version of "A Streetcar Named Desire." This production is presented by Split Britches, a local ensemble, and Bloolips, a British group. The cast includes Bette Bourne, Precious Pearl, and Lois Weaver. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Feb. 21-23 at 10. Through March 9.)

"Three Stories High"—A play written by Madeleine Olnek and directed by Deb Margolin. (Cooper Square Theatre, 50 E. 7th St. Feb. 21-24 at 8. Through March 20.)

"Dancing on Thin Ice"—An ice show performed by Ice Theatre of New York and presented by Dancing in the Streets. (Wollman Rink, Prospect Park, Brooklyn. Feb. 23 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

P.S. 122—Feb. 21-24 at 9:30: "Green Eyes Are Fine," a new performance work by the Otrabanda Company, written and directed by Roger Babb, with choreography by Rocky Bornstein and music by Blue Gene Tyranny. Through March 3. . . . ¶ Feb. 22-24 at 8: Carmelita Tropicana. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

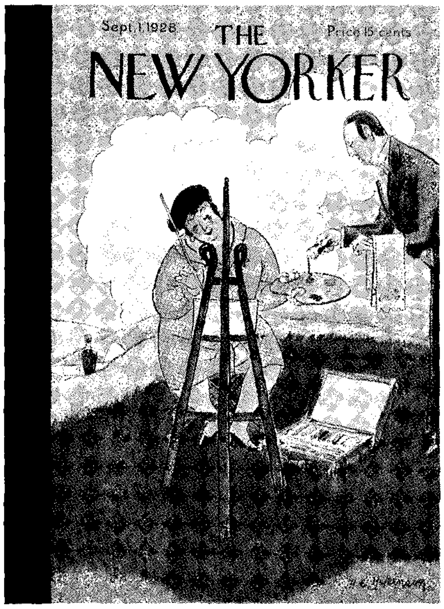
ART

THE Met is really hopping right now. In addition to the important Malevich and Fauvist surveys, and the wonderful "Théâtre de la Mode" exhibition, with its uncannily timely preamble of fashion-related photographs taken in Paris during the Second World War, there is also the Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) show, which, perhaps surprisingly, has been drawing rather large crowds. The Friedrich show is small. It occupies two modestly proportioned rooms in the Lehman wing (one is sheathed in ostentatiously frayed, Old Worldish red velvet), and consists of nine paintings, most of *them* small, and eleven works on paper, all lent by the Hermitage and Pushkin Museums, in the Soviet Union. The artist himself has at least until recently been the focus of primarily specialized interest. But it is really very easy to understand Friedrich's resurgence and growing popularity. These works are essentially illustrations. They even seem to foreshadow the stories of Edgar Allan Poe, who would become an international sensation about a decade later. (Almost everything in this show could be titled "Ulalume" or "Annabel Lee.")

Especially in the drawings—wonderfully moody, macabre depictions of owls and coffins and windows gaping out onto . . . what?—but also in a few paintings of same-sex couples staring out into the nothingness of sea or air, viewers will find haunted, luminous images of the early-Romantic set-piece vision of modern malaise and melancholia. The simple observation that such works are, arguably, *pictures* rather than paintings in any fleshly, fulsome, or otherwise tactile sense of the word has caused some ruckus. Recently, for instance, the dependably bilious Hilton Kramer took this exhibition to task, like the little boy who points at the emperor. His creditable remarks about painterliness, and even about Friedrich's questionable "greatness," were voided by spurious argument and by the fact that he accused curators and essayists alike of being part of a "cult," and of trying to put something over on us by praising Friedrich. This exhibition of work by an artist all but unrepresented in America is immensely valuable—how else are we to make up our minds? And the catalogue—edited and crisply annotated by Sabine Rewald, with essays by Robert Rosenblum, and by Boris Asvarishch, of the Hermitage—is just fine.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Nowhere in the art of this century is the Zeitgeist of utopian modernism more eloquently conveyed than in the career of Kasimir Malevich (1878-1935), the great Russian painter, designer, and visionary aesthetician. A very atmospheric array of his classic Suprematist works is on view here, along with early, chunky Fauvist figures, and a number of intensely peculiar late paintings from the thirties. Even in the earliest paintings one can sense the pulsating, from-the-feet-up energy that, when mixed with the romance of Slavic folklore, has traditionally meant spirit in Russian art. It becomes quite clear, too, that Malevich's Suprematist works—paintings like the amazing "Black Square," "Black Cross," and "Black Circle," all from 1923, or his exquisite white-on-white compositions—are icons. Through March 24. . . . ¶ "The Fauve Landscape" brings together nearly a hundred and twenty-five paintings made between 1904 and 1908 by the principal Fauvists—Derain, Matisse, Braque, and their circle of friends. . . . ¶ Nine paintings and eleven works on paper by the German artist Caspar David Friedrich. Through March 31. . . . ¶ "Théâtre de la Mode," in the Costume Institute, is a re-creation of a 1945 fashion exhibition that raised money for French war relief. Due to a fabric shortage, the couture, by such designers as Balenciaga, Lanvin, and Worth, was presented in miniature, on thirty-inch wire mannequins with ceramic heads. A hundred and seventy of the original dolls have been restored for this show. Through April 14. . . . ¶ "Albrecht Dürer: The Apocalypse" presents fifteen woodcuts of apocalyptic catastrophes, along with a small number of Gothic and Renaissance prints. Through March 17. . . . ¶ Photographs from the fifties and sixties, selected from the museum's collection. Among the artists shown are William Klein, Helen Levitt, Bill Brandt, and Lisette Model. Through March 17. . . . ¶ An exhibition of seventeen Dutch-style cupboards crafted in New York and New Jersey between 1650 and 1800. Through April 7. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)



Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—The work of Russian Constructivist Liubov Popova (1889-1924) is not as well known as that of her contemporaries Malevich, Rodchenko, and Tatlin, but this show—of fifty-five paintings, sixty works on paper, and a selection of theatre, book, and textile designs—should go far to redress that fact. Through April 23. . . . ¶ In the third of the museum's "Artist's Choice" series, Chuck Close, perhaps today's most enigmatic portraitist, has covered practically every available inch of the small gallery where "Christina's World" previously reigned with framed portraits from the museum's collection. While the very idea of the portrait seems antithetical to the Modern's mission, Close has come up with an endless series of amazing juxtapositions. Ignoring the museum's traditional curatorial divisions, which rank the importance of art according to medium, the artist has combined paintings, prints, sculptures, drawings, and photographs without any apparent judgment, with the possible exception of generally avoiding bona-fide masterpieces. Balthus's portrait of Miró and his daughter offers a special glimpse into both artists' psyches, while Wegman's double portrait of his Weimaraner Fay Ray and the painter Ed Ruscha is indebted to puns for its logic. On one wall is Timothy Greenfield-Sanders' photograph of Cindy Sherman, today's chameleon self-portraitist; on another is Edward Weston's photo of Nahui Olin, a bizarre image that undoubtedly influenced Sherman. If you crouch down very low, you'll find a lithograph by Picasso of his children Paloma and Claude, done with the consummate personal mark—fingerprints, a technique picked up several decades later by the curator himself. Through March 19. . . . ¶ An installation by Dennis Adams that includes documentary photographs of the museum's 1942 photography exhibition "Road to Victory." Through Feb. 28. . . . ¶ "Art of the Forties." Two hundred and seventy-five works, spanning all of the mediums in the museum's collection, made during that decade. Starts Feb. 24. . . . ¶ Fourteen panoramic photographs of Antarctica, taken in 1989 by Stuart Klipper. Through March 19. . . . ¶ "British Photography from the Thatcher Years." Through April 30. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—An exhibition of more than a hundred drawings by Jasper Johns. The works span the artist's career and are in a variety of mediums, including pencil, charcoal, pastel, oil crayon, and watercolor. Starts Feb. 22. . . . ¶ Sixty paintings, sculptures, and prints from the nineteen-eighties, including work by Jasper Johns, Barbara Kruger, Susan Rothenberg, and David Salle. Through March 24. . . . ¶ A small selection, in the lobby, of twenty-nine Surrealist and Surrealist-inspired drawings. Through March 24. . . . ¶ "Robert Rauschenberg: The Silk Screen Paintings, 1962-64." Half of the nearly eighty silk-screen paintings the artist made during the early sixties are on view, and their energy is intense. These paintings are striking because not only do they chronicle the spirit of their time with amalgamations of machine-produced media images—Rauschenberg's Kennedy is as much an icon as Warhol's Marilyn—but they are also chockablock full of glorious brushwork. Through March 17. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Among the seventy-four paintings in "Albert Bierstadt: Art & Enterprise" are several of the artist's monumental Western landscapes, as well as a selection of his smaller plein-air oil sketches. . . . ¶ A lobby installation by Reeva Potoff that includes, among other materials, pages of the 1911 Encyclopaedia Brittanica arranged in a cone that reaches to the ceiling. Through March 31. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Manifest Destiny," a small show of rare nineteenth-century books and illustrations relating to government expeditions into "frontier" areas in the United States. Through April 30. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 9.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—Thirty-five pieces of furniture made over the past thirty years by Wendell Castle. Many of the pieces incorporate trompe-l'oeil and faux-Art Deco effects. Through April 28. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Romance of the Taj Mahal." Shah Jahan (1592-1666), a descendant of Tamerlane and Genghis Khan, ruler of the most powerful Indian empire, was a great patron of the arts. Of all the great Mogul monuments he erected, by far the best known is the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum for his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. The Taj Mahal is the ultimate expression of power through death, but, as the curator, Pratapaditya Pal, so deftly indicates in this exhibition's catalogue, it has also become synonymous with India in advertising and promotion, and has come to be associated with everything from riches to romance, blues singers to calendars. The first half of this exhibition includes a tight and often dazzling display of objects from Shah Jahan's court: an extensive and glorious collection of paintings to suit virtually every interest, from elegant depictions of court life to exquisite color studies of flowers; a rug intricately woven with two thousand knots per square inch; and magnificent rubies and emeralds. In the second half, which examines the hold the Taj Mahal has had on later generations of travellers and painters, this otherwise concise show becomes silly, with a succession of paintings ranging from mediocre to dreadful. Through March 17. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—"Children in Chinese Art" presents images of the little tykes in thirty-six objects, including paintings, ceramics, and jade, from the second century to the present. There is also a separate selection of more than a hundred works on paper by contemporary Chinese children. Through March 2. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—A hundred sculptures and thirty-one drawings by Jacques Lipchitz. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 3.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"The Drawings of Anthony Van Dyck." Ninety sketches, studies, and more elaborate preparatory drawings by the master baroque portraitist (1599-1641). Through April 21. . . . ¶ A smaller selection of forty drawings by seventeenth-century Flemish artists such as Rubens, Jacob Jordaens, and David Vinckboons. Through April 21. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Ave., at 104th St.—The last stop on a three-year tour for "The International Art Show for the End of World Hunger." The exhibition presents work by forty artists, including Susan Rothenberg, Walter Dahn, Nam June Paik, and Richard Hamilton. Through March 15. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A beautiful and entertaining group of drawings on loan from the Auckland City Art Gallery, in New Zealand, by the influential Swiss Romantic Henry Fuseli (1745-1825), who lived in London. The marvellous, informal vividness of these drawings has led scholars to believe that the whole lot may have been chosen by Fuseli as a present to an artist friend—conceivably William Blake. Mad eighteenth-century hairdos abound (move over, Frida Kahlo!), along with highly literate depictions from Shakespeare and some very sexy interpretations of Greek mythology. In a melting "Eros and Psyche," from 1808, the curtain of modesty turns to vapor with one brush of Cupid's bow, and the artist, free now to boast, announces (in Greek), "This is, indeed, my Eros, not Titian's." Through March 24. . . . ¶ Eastman Johnson's "The Cranberry Harvest, Island of Nantucket" was first shown at the National Academy's 1880 annual exhibition, and it is now the centerpiece of a show that includes thirteen of the artist's other cranberry-harvest studies and paintings. Through March 24. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Art What Thou Eat" is a show of eighty nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings and sculptures, all having to do with those three square meals a day. Images range from Samuel Marsden Brookes' "Steelhead Salmon" (1885) to David Wojnarowicz's "Tuna" (1983). Through March 22. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—"The AIDS Epidemic Series." Twenty-one large-scale paintings and eight drawings by Luis Cruz Azaceta. Starts Feb. 21. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A show of forty works from the museum's collection, many recently acquired, including pieces by Romare Bearden, Betye and Alison Saar, and Sam Gilliam. Through March 17. . . . ¶ "From the Studio: Artists-in-Residence, 1989-90." Twenty-nine sculptures by Raùl Acero, Paul Gardère, and Jerome Meadows. Through March 17. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Brice Marden—The sight of Marden's classic seventies "Grove Group," assembled for the first time, is a slow, considerable pleasure and is also of historical note. The five abstract greenish paintings, inspired by sojourns in Greece, seem fired by landscape, tempered by architecture, and glazed by a sort of neo-Ruskinian moral anxiety, as well as, more literally, by the artist's lapidary encaustic technique. Through March 16. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Short List—thomas hart benton, Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (through March 2); **klaus fussman,** Ralph, 43 E. 78th St. (through March 2); **gregory gillespie,** Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through March 2); **richard oelze,** Lafayette Parke, 58 E. 79th St. (through March 16); **stephen pace,** Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St. (through Feb. 23), and Perlow, 560 Broadway (through Feb. 27); **philip pearlstein** and **barbara schwartz,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (open Mondays, through March 2); **robert rauschenberg,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through March 7); **alice schille,** Coe Kerr, 49 E. 82nd St. (open Mondays, through March 2).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Janet Fish—New paintings, most of them still-lifes, and many in a nighttime mood. Fish is a virtuoso of transparency and texture, and she is especially good at striking a sturdy balance between conventional representation and abstract composition. In some of the best of these works, an everyday, domestic realism is subverted by Orientalist, medieval, chivalric, or heraldic themes. In "Man's Best Friend," for instance, a black-and-white lapdog scratching itself on a kilim rug becomes part of a larger pattern of contemporary exoticisms for the home, and in "By the Sword" a beautiful art-pottery vase joins a bouquet of dried wildflowers, a pomegranate, and the knightly weapon to create a courtly table arrangement for today. Through Feb. 23. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

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Malcolm Morley—Morley's art is largely a matter of protean paint-handling skills governed by a fertile but chaotic brain. Here, in addition to a group of small pedestal sculptures of war machinery (they look like William Wegman's boy-toy images dipped and cast), we find a bunch of huge, luridly painted canvases that keep changing their minds, making a major theatrical display of tempestuous indecision. Abstract Expressionist broadstroking gives way to lyrical feathering, which in turn builds up to Freudian caricature à la Philip Guston or a neo-Gothic Expressionism reminiscent of Max Beckmann, only to culminate in a moment of sensitive painterly anecdote that brings to mind the early work of Alex Katz. There is one horizontally stacked triptych whose middle section—an Arthurian knight—almost had us weeping from maternal exhaustion. Morley is *very* motor. Through March 2. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Alice Provensen—A show of original watercolors for a recently published children's book titled "The Buck Stops Here: The Presidents of the United States." The visual style is bright, busy, and folkloric—quilts and samplers seem to have been inspirations—and the nuggets of information conveyed about our leaders are clear, essentially non-partisan, and respectful without being reverential. Well-known earlier collaborative works by Mrs. Provensen and her late husband, Martin, are also on view. Through March 9. (Feiwel, 24 W. 57th St.)

Niele Toroni—This Swiss artist's work usually consists of rows of short, single-colored brushstrokes painted on the walls, always with the same #50 brush. Like the output of the Conceptualist Daniel Buren and the serialist Sol LeWitt, Toroni's work has no experimental or arty intentions. In his current two-room installation, the center of each room is inhabited by four easels arranged facing outward, each holding a canvas of orange strokes. On each of the four walls is a square of blue strokes. The groupings establish a concise relationship between figure and ground, viewer and art work. Curiously, the more arty the materials, the less arty the work tends to be. Through Feb. 23. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Short List—william bailey, Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 13); **ben berns,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through March 2); **robert goodnough,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 16); **philip guston,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through March 9); **arina malukova** and **fred reichman,** Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St. (through March 9); **robert andrew parker,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 9); **betty parsons,** Tilton, 24 W. 57th St. (through March 2); **rodney ripps,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 2); **charles seliger,** Rosenfeld, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 9); **jack tworkov** and **dorothea rockburne,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 2); **neil welliver,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (through March 2).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Ming Fay—The ultimate walk-in still-life: huge clamshells, wishbones, ginseng roots, mollusks, fruits, and other assorted organic matter arranged on the floor and walls. These painted papier-mâché sculptures are sensitively executed, and they have a fine degree of surface articulation and a pervasive sense of impending decay. The exhibition's subtitle, "From Archeology to Science Fiction," describes the tone accurately. Through March 23. (Exit Art, 578 Broadway.)

Jan Hashey—Numerous felt-tip-marker drawings of a bowl and its shadow, in different colors, each exhibited with a carbon copy below it. Whether displayed in large or small groupings, the works have an embellished beauty to them; in the larger groups, a wonderful rhythm develops across the rows of drawings and carbons. Through Feb. 23. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Alfred Jensen (1903-81)—Virtually nothing is known of the pre-fifties art of the elfin Jensen, who was known in the thirties and forties as the companion of art patron and Baltimore Museum benefactor Saidie May, and in the fifties as the better-adjusted sidekick of Mark Rothko. In the late fifties, Jensen's work seemed to arrive completely formed, in a style that had nothing to do with the prevailing Abstract Expressionism. Younger generations have returned to his work from this period, and it has become the antecedent to many different kinds of art, from the opulent mosaics of the pattern painters to the obsessive diagramming of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Jensen's vision—an amalgam of Guatemalan textile designs, scientific diagrams, arcane numerical systems, color theories, and much more—is truly eccentric, with something of an autistic genius to it. This show of seven works is a fine selection of his luscious, beautiful, and haunted canvases. Through Feb. 23. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

Wolfgang Laib—Two modest and powerful installations composed almost exclusively of beeswax. The first thing you notice is the scent, which is as comforting as freshly baked bread. One work consists of two elongated house shapes—the size of coffins and in the form of reliquaries—resting, high on a pair of wood beams sunk into the wall. The other consists of a long wall covered in honey-brown wax panels, with a low, recessed door. The piece is illuminated by a single bare bulb suspended by a wire. It is a beautiful and disturbing work, maternally warm and at the same time funereal. Through March 2. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

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"Grown-ups tell us, 'Just say no.' That's easy for them to say."

"Maybe they forgot what it's like.

"At parties, at school, kids are saying to try this or do that, and they're my friends. I mean how many times can I hear I'm a loser.

"Sure I'm scared of drugs. It's just there's so much pressure. You want to say no. But you can take a lot of heat for it."

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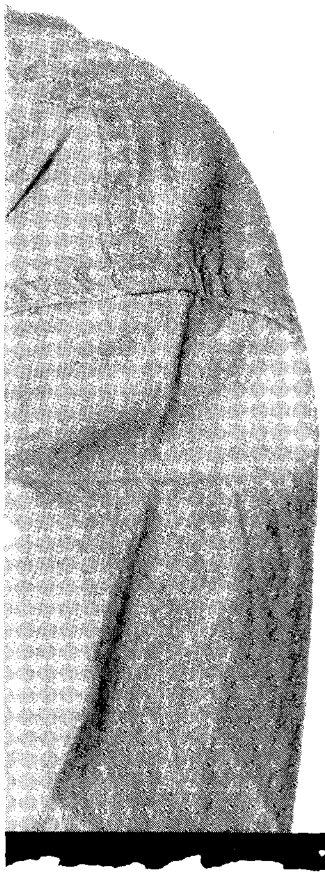


ART—Cont'd

Stephen Laub—These new objects, which incorporate small archival photographs, are more enigmatic and sculptural than Laub's earlier works. One piece, which is a bit Gober-like, is colored Ryman white and echoes an accompanying photo of black people in the back of a bus. Through March 2. (Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

Mary Lucier—A key figure in recent American video art, Lucier is playing down the video component in this sculptural installation about landscape, industry, and decay. The results are disappointing. The best part *is* the video, which is essentially a sequence of images of rusted machinery and relics of mass transportation and communication that speak of the days when the railroads were the nation's bloodline. The video is shown on a large monitor atop a forklift, the only grouping in the show that has weight and poetry. Whereas the other sculptural arrangements are too Kienholzian, this one has a romantic spirit all its own. Through Feb. 23. (Greenberg Wilson, 560 Broadway.)

Mimmo Rotella—A show tracing the course of Rotella's marriage of Abstract Expressionism and anarchy from the fifties to the present. Several decades ago, working alongside other *nouveaux réalistes*, Rotella ripped gangs of posters off Parisian streets. The earlier works here, which consist of layers of posters ripped through to reveal layers beneath, have uncannily sophisticated compositions and color relationships, with the arcing rhythms of Krasner and the compositional jaggedness of Still. The recent works continue the fifties spirit with a touch of Dada: a large poster of a woman in a green vinyl suit is ripped in a way that conjures Rothko. The show reaches a glorious climax with a billboard from 1990 for "Holiday on Ice"—a grand landscape with some of the heroic scale of Newman. Through March 2. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

Alan Shields—Paintings on canvas embroidered with patterns of black, white, and colored threads. The pieces are very optical, with touches of orphic futurism, Op, and Tantric art, as well as the mysticism of Alfred Jensen and the ritualistic, somewhat zany informality of Alighiero e Boetti. Through March 2. (Cooper, 149 Wooster St.)

"The Political Arm"—Most of the work in this show does not simply take on political subjects but also attempts to bring a political consciousness to the very forms of art. Barbara Kruger's photo work about the fracture of the left, for example, was not created as a unique, rarefied piece but was published as an issue of the magazine *Aqui*. Hans Haacke's "Ceci n'est pas un pouce," which explores the co-dependency of art and patronage, and the documentation of a Krzysztof Wodiczko light projection, which casts the art museum in the role of a sanctioned political terrorist, are cogent examinations of the politics endemic to the institutions of the art system. With the inclusion of Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre, and Lawrence Weiner, the show takes a peculiar and thought-provoking turn, conjuring the political climate of the sixties in which their art developed. LeWitt's wall drawing and Weiner's conceptual wordwork suggest that a rereading of their art along political lines could prove rewarding; the Andre work, however, could benefit from further explanation. Through Feb. 23. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Group Shows—At **Gladstone**, 99 Greene St. and **Steingladstone**, 99 Wooster St.: Large-scale works by major artists who came of age in the sixties—LeWitt, Flavin, Nauman, Kounellis, Long, Merz, and Fabro. Most of the works look exquisite, including Long's recent circle made of bricks of English peat, LeWitt's cube progression from 1967, and, especially, Kounellis's band of musical instruments arranged along a wall, each with a blowtorch attached to it. Although the propane tanks are empty (owing to city regulations), burn marks on the wall and the floor give a sense of what this ghost band flambé might look and sound like. Through March 2. . . . **Metro Pictures**, 150 Greene St.: A Freudian specializing in toilet training could have a field day at this oddly invigorating show, which juxtaposes some of Cindy Sherman's nastier photographs of hot dogs, dildos, and gooey condiments with Mike Kelley's "Garbage Drawings," his black, white, and mulatto tangles of yarn, and Carroll Dunham's drawings of invented organs and the gases they release. Through March 2.

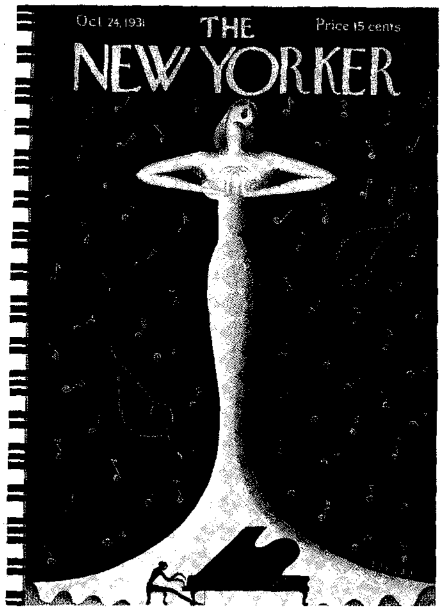
Short List—**Larry Bell** and **Kenny Scharf**, Shafrazi, 130 Prince St. (through March 23); **John Bowman**, Lang & O'Hara, 568 Broadway (through March 9); **Stan Brodsky**, Kelly, 591 Broadway (through March 5); **Eric Bulatov** and **Oleg Vassilyev**, Kind, 136 Greene St. (through March 12); **Linda Daniels**, Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through March 9); **Wim Delvoye**, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through March 2); **Sue Etkin**, Kasmin, 580 Broadway (through March 16); **Louise Fishman**, Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway (through March 23); **Inge Mahn**, Brown, 560 Broadway (through Feb. 27); **Agnes Martin**, Boone, 417 West Broadway (through Feb. 23); **Manuel Neri**, Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Feb. 23); **David Rabinowitch**, Flynn, 113 Crosby St. (through April 30); **Alan Scarritt**, Engelhorn, 591 Broadway (through March 16); **Peter Shelton**, Louver, 130 Prince St. (through March 9); **Nancy Spero** and **Chris Burden**, Baer, 476 Broome St. (through March 9); **Pat Sutton**, Zarre, 379 West Broadway (through March 9); **Fred Wilson** and **Lesley Dill**, Gracie Mansion Gallery, 532 Broadway (through March 9).

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography and the movies have always influenced each other, but from the evidence of recent exhibitions it seems as if Hollywood has become the favorite source of inspiration for photography, replacing that old perennial, nature. In Bruce Charlesworth's exhibition at the Jayne H. Baum gallery (588 Broadway, near Houston Street), you can see work that draws on both nature and the business of entertainment. If the lights were dimmed at this show, titled "Man and Nature," people might be tempted to scream. These Orwellian-setup photographs, often of people in scary situations, made us think of David Lynch and Stephen King, but they also disappointed us. Although Charlesworth has always impressed us with his wit and versatility—he's an artist who has also worked with film, video, painting, and installations—here his combination of horror and humor feels thin. We found ourselves spending more time looking at a book on his work, which was by the gallery's front desk, than at the pictures themselves.

Judith Joy Ross—Ross works with an old-fashioned 8 x 10 view camera, and develops her pictures on what the exhibition catalogue calls "printing-out paper," but what she comes up with is decidedly contemporary. Her subjects range from kids in a park to people visiting the Vietnam War Memorial, from congressional staff members to youths in Easton, Pennsylvania. Most recently, she has taken pictures of men and women in the Army Reserve who were about to be sent to Saudi Arabia. Hers is the kind of vision that used to be called "proletarian." It's also deeply soulful. Through Feb. 23. (Danziger, 415 West Broadway.)

Short List—**Bruce Charlesworth**, Baum, 588 Broadway (through March 16); **Lois Conner** and **Val Telberg**, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through March 16); **Willie Doherty**, Cugliani, 508 Greenwich St., at Spring St. (through March 2); **Stuart Klipper**, Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9, through March 19); **Jacques Henri Lartigue**, Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through March 16); **Clarence John Laughlin**, Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 23); **Lisette Model**, International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through March 24); **Andrea Modica**, Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring Street (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Feb. 23); **Martin Parr**, Borden, 560 Broadway (through March 23).



MUSIC

Big talents usually declare themselves early—almost always, in music, by the threshold of the teens—but sometimes progress is interrupted and the path to mature achievement runs rough. In a few cases intellect and will power overcome early disadvantages (Wagner and Berlioz gave little hint of genius in their twenties); more often, the result is a checkered career. Franz Schmidt, born in 1874, showed clear promise; by age fourteen he was a piano pupil of the great Leschetizky, and shortly after that he took composition lessons with Bruckner. But his early creative efforts were a little sporadic, and he spent the bulk of his twenties rather fruitlessly as an orchestral cellist (albeit under Mahler). He resumed composition in earnest around 1916, and won the admiration of discriminating judges without ever quite establishing a workmanlike flow of new pieces or a full-time composer's livelihood.

The works of Schmidt that we have encountered are symphonic; the names that come to mind in describing them are Liszt, Brahms, Reger, possibly Zemlinsky. It is dense music, harmonically and orchestrally, and, in the right hands, rich. An orchestra or conductor less than scrupulous about balance and thematic lucidity, however, can make it thick and heavy.

Franz Welser-Moest is a conductor for whom the path from youthful promise has been eminently smooth: just thirty, he is music director of the London Philharmonic and the possessor of a fat recording contract with EMI/Angel. His program this week—his first engagement with the New York Philharmonic—includes relatively standard fare by Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Brahms. He is to lead Schmidt's Fourth Symphony (1932-1933) February 28-March 2 and on March 5. Time will tell whether Mr. Welser-Moest has the stuff to endure when youth is past; these concerts will tell whether he has the ear, the technical wherewithal, and the diplomacy to pilot the Philharmonic through a score that wants alert stewardship.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; and for the Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St., 874-7515.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—LE NOZZE DI FIGARO, with Pamela Coburn, Helen Donath, Frederica von Stade, Jorma Hynninen, and Samuel Ramey; conducted by James Conlon. (Feb. 18 and Feb. 22 at 8.) . . . LA BOHÈME, with Hei-Kyung Hong, Myra Merritt, Placido Domingo, and Brian Schexnayder; Christian Badea. (Feb. 19 at 8 and Feb. 23 at 1:30.) . . . LUISA MILLER, with Kallen Esperian, Isola Jones, Luciano Pavarotti, and Leo Nucci; Nello Santi. (Feb. 20 at 8.) . . . With Susan Dunn, Isola Jones, Luciano Pavarotti, and Leo Nucci; Nello Santi. (Feb. 23 at 8.) . . . With Susan Dunn, Wendy White, Luciano Pavarotti, and Leo Nucci; Nello Santi. (Feb. 26 at 8.) . . . FIDELIO, with Ingrid Haubold, Judith Blegen, Gary Lakes, and John Macurdy; Christof Perick. (Feb. 21 at 8.) . . . KÁŤA KABANOVÁ, the opening of a new production of Janáček's brooding study of the "mother-in-law problem," marital infidelity, and suicide by drowning. With Gabriela Beňačková, Leonie Rysanek, Susan Quittmeyer, Wieslaw Ochman, Allan Glassman, Peter Straka, and Aage Haugland; Charles Mackerras. (Feb. 25 at 8.) . . . DER ROSENKAVALIER, with Mechthild Gessendorf, Tatiana Troyanos, Barbara Kilduff, Luciano Pavarotti, and Aage Haugland; Jiří Kout. (Feb. 27 at 7:30.)

Opéra Français de New York—Yves Abel directs concert performances of two one-act operas in which young love triumphs over familial obstacles: André Grétry's "Les Deux Avares" and Bizet's "Le Docteur Miracle." The latter was written in 1856 for an operetta competition organized by Jacques Offenbach, in which the eighteen-year-old Bizet tied for the top prize. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Feb. 23 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Franz Welser-Moest conducts symphonies by Mozart and Mendelssohn; he is joined by sixteen-year-old Maxim Vengerov in Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 21, Feb. 23, and Feb. 26, all at 8; and Feb. 22 at 2.)

New Jersey Symphony—Hugh Wolff conducts music by Debussy and Stephen Albert; soprano Dawn Upshaw joins the orchestra for Charles Tomlinson Griffes's "Three Songs of Fiona Macleod" and Paul Dukas's recently unearthed "L'Ondine et le Pêcheur." (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 18 at 8. At the time of going to press, labor negotiations involving the musicians were in progress, so you would do well to check by telephone to make certain of the performance.)

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost directs the orchestra, the Metropolitan Singers/Greek Choral Society, and various soloists in Orff's "Carmina Burana." The concert also includes works by Constant Lambert, Arvo Pärt, and Reinhold Glière (his Concerto for Coloratura Soprano and Orchestra, with soloist Beverly Hoch). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 21 at 8.)

Cleveland Orchestra—Vladimir Ashkenazy conducts Sibelius's Second Symphony and Rachmaninoff's Third. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 22 at 8.) . . . ¶ Leonard Slatkin conducts Vaughan Williams' Fifth Symphony, Rimsky-Korsakov's "Russian Easter Overture," and the New York première of Ellen Zwilich's Oboe Concerto, with soloist John Mack. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 23 at 8.)

San Francisco Symphony—Herbert Blomstedt conducting. At Carnegie Hall, Feb. 25 at 8: Beethoven's Fourth Symphony, George Perle's "Sinfonietta II," and Hindemith's Cello Concerto, with Yo-Yo Ma. . . . ¶ At Avery Fisher Hall, Feb. 27 at 8: Bartók's "Concerto for Orchestra," a new work by Peter Lieberson, and Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, with Gil Shaham.

Vienna Philharmonic—The first two of five concerts at Carnegie Hall. Claudio Abbado conducting. Feb. 26 at 8: Bruckner's Fourth Symphony (the "Romantic") and the "Lied der Waldtaube" from Schoenberg's "Gurrelieder," with mezzo-soprano Brigitte Fassbaender. . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 8: Bruckner's Fourth Symphony and Mozart's Second Flute Concerto, with soloist Wolfgang Schulz.

Chanticleer—The a-cappella men's choral en-

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MUSIC–Cont'd

semble includes in its program works by Haydn ("Die Heiligen Zehn Gebote"), Banchieri, Bartók, and Rorem. (92nd Street Y. Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Feb. 21 at 8.)

Goodman Chamber Choir—Andrea Goodman *directs contemporary choral music from* Hungary, Poland, and Russia. Nearly half of the choir's members are recent émigrés from Eastern Europe. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. Feb. 26 at 8. For information about tickets, call 254-1717.)

RECITALS

Emanuel Ax—The pianist performs sets of variations by Beethoven, Webern, and André Previn (the première of his "Variations on a Theme by Haydn"); a Schubert impromptu; and Liszt's B-Minor Sonata. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

Cecilia Bartoli—Mezzo-soprano, singing songs and arias by Rossini, Bellini, and Mozart, as well as a selection of *arie antiche.* Pianist Martin Katz assists. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 20 at 8.)

Ensemble Intercontemporain—Pierre Boulez directs his Paris-based modern-music ensemble in several of his own compositions (including the "Improvisations sur Mallarmé I et II," with soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson), as well as works by Webern, Ligeti, and Nono (his "*Sofferte onde serene,*" *with pianist* Maurizio Pollini). (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 21 at 8.)

Sylvan Winds—Performing chamber music for wind quintet by Joseph Jongen, and arrangements of pieces by Beethoven and Schumann. Mezzo-soprano D'Anna Fortunato joins the ensemble in Joseph Goodman's "Four Songs on Poems by Juan Ramón Jiménez." (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Feb. 21 at 8.)

Margaret Leng Tan—The pianist, who, as a specialist in untraditional piano technique, is as likely to be found "under the hood" of the instrument as seated at its keyboard, performs music by John Cage. Her program includes "In the Name of the Holocaust," "Water Music," "4′ 33″" (in which the performer provides the silence, and the rest of the world provides the sounds), and "The *Perilous Night" (inspired by a series of draw*ings in the Whitney's Jasper Johns show, which opens on the day of the concert). (Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. Feb. 22 at 6. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert, or in advance at the museum's sales desk.)

Claudine Carlson—*Mezzo-soprano,* with pianist Thomas Muraco, performing songs by Schubert, Schumann, Poulenc, and others. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 22 at 8.)

Beaux Arts Trio—Performing trios by Beethoven, Schumann, and Dvořák. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 22-23 at 8.)

Juilliard Focus! 91—A retrospective of twentieth-century music of neoclassical inspiration. Feb. 22 at 8: JoAnn Falletta conducts the Juilliard Symphony *in orchestral works by* Stravinsky, Piston, and Ellen Zwilich. (Alice Tully Hall.) . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 3: Solo and chamber music from the decade following the First World War, by Satie, Poulenc, Schoenberg, and others. (Juilliard Theatre.) . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 8: Music from the nineteen-*twenties* and thirties, by Milhaud, de Falla (his Harpsichord Concerto), Stravinsky (his Concerto for Two Solo Pianos), and others. (Juilliard Theatre.) . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 8: Works by Americans (and American immigrants), including Cowell, Nancarrow, Hindemith, and Mennin. (Juilliard Theatre.) . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 8: Post-Second World War compositions by Dallapiccola, Rochberg, Shostakovich, and others. (Juilliard Theatre.)

Blair Tindall—The oboist is joined by pianist Brian Zeger, tenor Robert White, and members of the Colorado String Quartet. The program spotlights pieces about insects—"The Grasshopper" and "The Wasp," by Britten; "The Grasshopper and the Ant," by Antal Doráti; and Elizabeth Brown's "Boll Weevil"—in addition to Vaughan Williams' "*Blake Songs,*" *Mozart's Oboe Quartet, and* sonatas by Telemann and Saint-Saëns. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 24 at 2.)

Brahms Trios—The composer's three piano trios, with violinist Itzhak Perlman, cellist Lynn Harrell, and pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 24 at 3.)

Hermann Prey—Baritone, with pianist Leonard Hokanson, performing Schubert's "Winterreise." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Feb. 24 at 3.)

North/South Consonance—American premières of vocal and instrumental music by Soviet composers, with commentary on the effects of *glasnost* on *contemporary music.* (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Feb. 24 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Newberry Consort—Performing seventeenth-century songs and chamber works from the Hapsburg courts of Madrid and Naples. Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, W. 121st St., just east of Broadway. 666-0675. Feb. 24 at 4.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Presenting works by Bach, Mozart (his Divertimento for String Trio, K. 563), and Berio, as well as a new Clarinet Quintet by Ellen Zwilich. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 24 at 5 and Feb. 26 at 7:30; the Feb. 24 concert is preceded by a lecture-discussion with Ms. Zwilich at 4, open to ticket-holders.)

Victoria de los Angeles—The soprano, *who has* earned a following of several generations of concertgoers since her début in 1944, offers a recital that includes works by Brahms, Granados, Albéniz, and de Falla. A benefit concert. (Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802. Feb. 24 at 5.)

Penderecki String Quartet—The Polish foursome, now resident in the United States, performs music by Haydn, Mendelssohn, Grażyna Bacewicz, and Penderecki. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Feb. 24 at 5.)

Goliard Concerts—Songs and chamber music by Schoenberg, Kodály, and Dvořák. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Feb. 24 at 7:30.)

Samuel Ramey—Bass, with pianist Warren Jones, presenting songs by Rossini, Ives, Copland, and Cole Porter, as well as arias by Handel, Mozart, and Verdi. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 24 at 8.)

Kathleen Battle and Jean-Pierre Rampal—The soprano and the flutist perform a wide-ranging concert of solo and ensemble works, with *various assisting artists. (Alice Tully Hall.* Feb. 24 at 8.)

Virtuosi Quintet—Wind quintets by Antonín Reicha, Milton Phibbs, and others, as well as Ludwig Thuille's Op. 6 Sextet for Wind Quintet and Piano (with pianist Cameron Grant). (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 25 at 8.)

Tokyo String Quartet—With violist Pinchas Zukerman, in an all-Mozart program. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 27 at 8.)

Artek Ensemble—The early-instrument ensemble, directed by Gwendolyn Toth, presents music and dances from Renaissance and Baroque Spain and Italy, featuring soprano Christine Brandes and Baroque dancer Alan Tjaarda Jones (who will perform, among other things, a Spanish "Folias," fully costumed, and clacking the castanets). (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. Feb. 27 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the performance.)

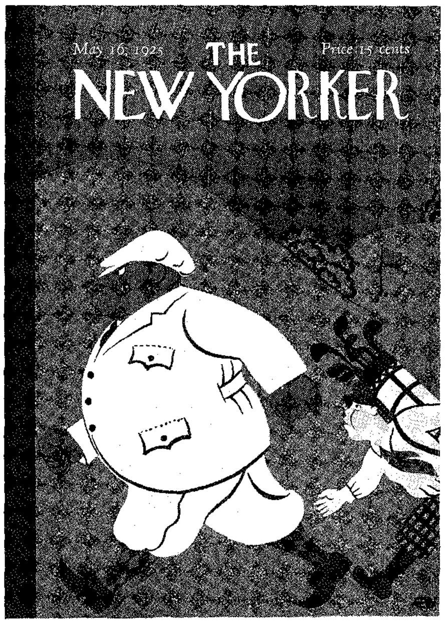
Musicians from Marlboro—Presenting Webern's String Trio, Mozart's G-Minor Piano Quartet, and Franck's Piano Quintet. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 27 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Neil Young & Crazy Horse—"It was the most *mega* thing I ever saw," said our companion after Neil Young's Madison Square Garden concert earlier this month, and in the next row the pogo-ing, hyper-ebullient twenty-year-old guy in a "Sponsored By Nobody" T-shirt seemed to agree. In a thirteen-song set, Young and the Horse gathered in a cluster near Ralph Molina's drum kit and tore the place down. The crowd responded with a Springsteen roar. Most of the concert was overwhelming arena rock, with Neil's guitar playing at its desperate, heartbreaking best. (There was a quieter interlude of Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" to go with the giant peace-sign backdrop and the long yellow ribbon that was draped around a microphone prop onstage.) The concert wound down into a spooky, demented-hoedown spirit—"Rockin' in the Free World," "Welfare Mother," and "Tonight's the Night" all sounded angry, ironic, and beautifully grim, and provided an apt wartime dénouement. If you missed that concert, don't miss the upcoming ones. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Feb. 22 at 8. . . . ¶ Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Feb. 24 at 7:30.)

Daryl Hall and John Oates—The most success-

THE
NEW YORKER



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THE
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NEW YORKER

ful recording duo in the history of pop music, Hall and Oates have had their ups ("She's Gone") and downs ("Maneater"). They have never become critics' darlings, and usually the more popular one of their albums is, the less merit it has. The duo's latest album, "Change of Season," is one of their least popular, and, true to form, one of their best. Daryl Hall, who's always done the bulk of the work, is a terrific, distinctive soul vocalist, and his tunes on the new record are among the most convincing he's written. The duo's concert history has been erratic. When G. E. Smith was the leader of the touring band, the group was dynamic, but the shows have suffered since he left. Hall and Oates are calling this an acoustic concert; their new tunes could prove that anyone who isn't listening is just out of touch. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Feb. 25-26 at 8.)

INXS—Nassau Coliseum. Feb. 18 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Meadowlands Arena. Feb. 21 at 7:30.

"Recession Blues"—B. B. King, Dr. John, and Maceo Parker. (Beacon Theatre. Feb. 23 at 8 and midnight.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Knicks—Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, Feb. 19. . . . ¶ Vs. the Seattle Supersonics, Feb. 21. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Bullets, Feb. 26. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the Sacramento Kings, Feb. 19. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia 76ers, Feb. 23. . . . ¶ Vs. the Indiana Pacers, Feb. 26. (Game time, 7:30.)

Rangers—Vs. the Islanders, Feb. 18 at 1:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Devils, Feb. 24 at 1:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Capitals, Feb. 27 at 7:30.

Islanders—Vs. the Philadelphia 76ers, Feb. 23. . . . ¶ Vs. the Buffalo Sabres, Feb. 26. (Game time, 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the Edmonton Oilers, Feb. 18. . . . ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Feb. 22. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Capitals, Feb. 25. (Game time, 7:45.)

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

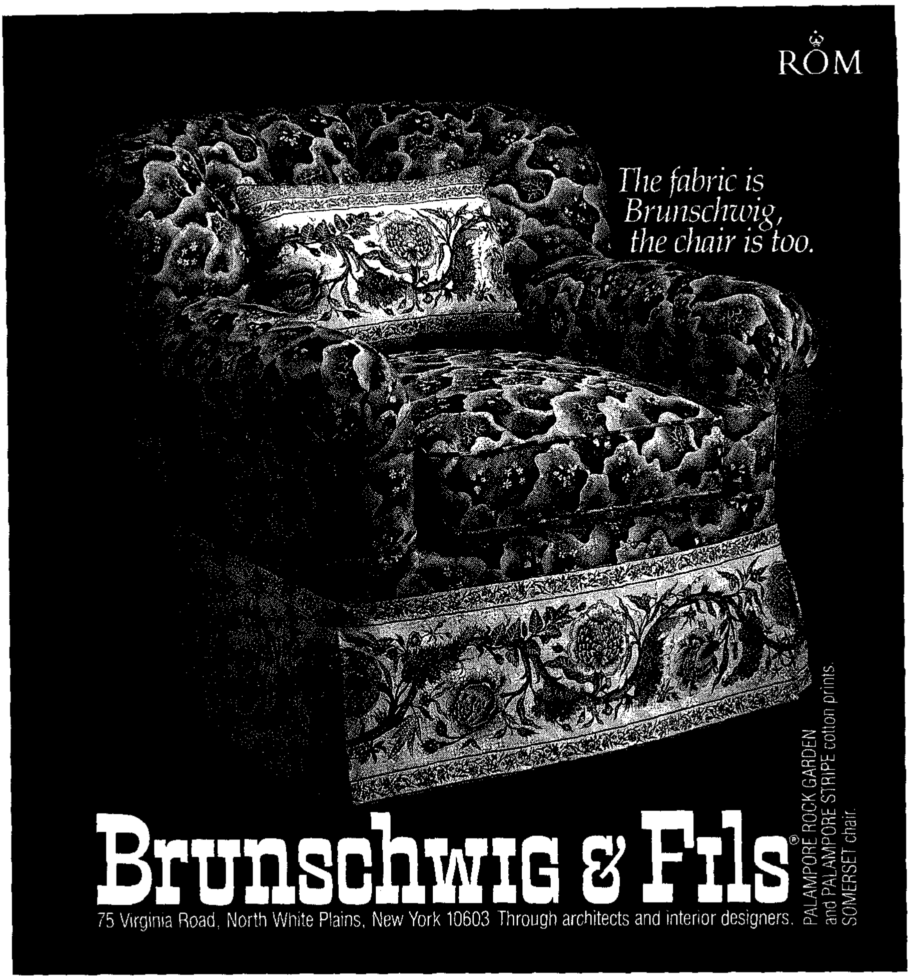
USA/Mobil Indoor Track & Field Championships—Featuring Diane Dixon, Meredith Rainey, Greg Foster, and Mohamed Issangar. Feb. 22 at 11:15. Finals start at 6:30. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Antiquarian Book Fair—More than seventy dealers will participate in the twelfth annual event in Greenwich Village. (P.S. 3, 490 Hudson St., between Christopher and Grove Sts. Feb. 22, from 6 to 10; Feb. 23, from noon to 7; and Feb. 24, from noon to 5. Tickets at the door on the days of the fair.)

Talks—Feb. 21 at 8: The composer Anthony Davis talks about his music with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Thulani Davis. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 8:15: Ernst Pawel and Leigh Hafrey talk about the life and works of Kafka. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.) . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 6: Edmund White talks about Jean Genet. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. For information about tickets, call 930-0571.)

Readings—Feb. 25 at 8: Norman Mailer reads from his own prose. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.) . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 7:30: Mary McGarry Morris reads from her new novel, "A Dangerous Woman." (Books & Co., 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 6:30: Mary Beth Hurt, Mia Dillon, and Andrea Marcovicci read stories by Richard Bausch, Pam Houston, and Eudora Welty. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 8: Bill McKibben, Andrew Revkin, and Michael Oppenheimer read from their own works. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799.)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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 22.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: "Perfectly Normal" (directed by Yves Simoneau), with Robbie Coltrane, Michael Riley, Deborah Duchene, Eugene Lipinski, and Kenneth Walsh.

Theatre 2: The Third Animation Celebration.

Theatre 3: "Vincent & Theo" (†).

Theatre 4: "Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead" (†).

Theatre 5: "Iron & Silk" (Shirley Sun), with Mark Salzman.

Theatre 6: Through Feb. 21: "Metropolitan" (Whit Stillman), with Edward Clements, Carolyn Farina, Christopher Eigeman, and Taylor Nichols. From Feb. 22: "Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau; in French), with Gérard Depardieu.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

Feb. 19-21: (Separate admissions) "Touki Bouki" (1973, Djibril Diop-Mambety; a Senegalese film); and "Yeleen" (1987, Souleymane Cisse).

Feb. 22-24: (Separate admissions) "Touki Bouki"; and "Yaaba" (Idrissa Ouedraogo).

From Feb. 26: (Separate admissions) "Touki Bouki"; and "Faces of Women" (1985, Desire Ecare).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "L.A. Story" (†).

Theatre 2: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis; and (evenings only) "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Cinema 12, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

"The Vanishing" (†).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)

Theatre 1: From Feb. 22: "Scenes from a Mall" (Paul Mazursky), with Bette Midler and Woody Allen.

Theatre 2: From Feb. 22: "The Sleazy Uncle" (Franco Brusati; in Italian), with Vittorio Gassman, Giancarlo Giannini, and Andrea Ferreol.

Theatre 3: From Feb. 22: "Superstar: The Life and Times of Andy Warhol" (Chuck Workman), a documentary.

Theatre 4: From Feb. 22: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†).

Theatre 5: From Feb. 22: "The Field" (Jim Sheridan), with Richard Harris, John Hurt, Tom Berenger, Brenda Fricker, and Sean Bean.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: "The Godfather Part III" (†).

Theatre 2: "Dances with Wolves" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Theatre 4: Through Feb. 21: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis. From Feb. 22: "He Said, She Said" (Ken Kwapis and Marisa Silver), with Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins, and Sharon Stone.

Theatre 5: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Theatre 6: "L.A. Story" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

"Avalon" (Barry Levinson), with Elizabeth Perkins, Aidan Quinn, Joan Plowright, Kevin Pollak, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Sam Krichinsky, Lou Jacobi, and Elijah Wood.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

"The Grifters" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)

Theatre 1: "Green Card" (†).

Theatre 2: "Hamlet" (†).

Theatre 3: "Nothing but Trouble" (Dan Aykroyd), with Chevy Chase, Aykroyd, John Candy, and Demi Moore.

Theatre 4: Through Feb. 21: "The Field" (Jim Sheridan), with Richard Harris, John Hurt, Tom Berenger, Brenda Fricker, and Sean Bean. From Feb. 22: "Scenes from a Mall" (Paul Mazursky), with Bette Midler and Woody Allen.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 21: "The Godfather Part III" (†). From Feb. 22: "He Said, She Said" (Ken Kwapis and Marisa Silver), with Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins, and Sharon Stone.

Theatre 2: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.

Theatre 3: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

"Awakenings" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"GoodFellas" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Theatre 1: "Nothing but Trouble" (Dan Aykroyd), with Chevy Chase, Aykroyd, John Candy, and Demi Moore.

Theatre 2: Through Feb. 21: "Queens Logic" (Steve Rash), with Joe Mantegna, John Malkovich, Kevin Bacon, Ken Olin, Tony Spiridakis, Linda Fiorentino, Chloe Webb, Tom Waits, and Jamie Lee Curtis. From Feb. 22: "Superstar: The Life and Times of Andy Warhol" (Chuck Workman), a documentary.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, in French), with Gérard Depardieu.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "Perfectly Normal" (Yves Simoneau), with Robbie Coltrane.

Theatre 2: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "Awakenings" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Grifters" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 21: "Green Card" (†). From Feb. 22: "Scenes from a Mall" (Paul Mazursky), with Bette Midler and Woody Allen.

Theatre 2: Through Feb. 21: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†). From Feb. 22: "Green Card" (†).

Theatre 3: Through Feb. 21: "Reversal of Fortune" (†). From Feb. 22: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.

Theatre 2: "L.A. Story" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

"Once Around" (Lasse Hallström), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, Danny Aiello, Laura San Giacomo, and Gena Rowlands.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Feb. 21: "The Godfather Part III" (†). From Feb. 22: "He Said, She Said" (Ken Kwapis and Marisa Silver), with Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins, and Sharon Stone.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

"Hamlet" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

"Dances with Wolves" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

Through Feb. 21: "The Godfather Part III" (†).

From Feb. 22: "He Said, She Said" (Ken Kwapis and Marissa Silver), with Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins, and Sharon Stone.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)

Theatre 1: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.

Theatre 2: "Edward Scissorhands" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: "Nothing but Trouble" (Dan Aykroyd), with Chevy Chase, Aykroyd, John Candy, and Demi Moore.

Theatre 2: Through Feb. 21: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara. From Feb. 22: "Scenes from a Mall" (Paul Mazursky), with Bette Midler and Woody Allen.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Theatre 1: Through Feb. 26: "Larks on a String" (1969, directed by Jiri Menzel; in Czech). From Feb. 27: "Blood in the Face" (Anne Bohlen, Kevin Rafferty, and James Ridgeway), a documentary.

Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.

Theatre 3: "1900" (1977, Bernardo Bertolucci), with Robert De Niro, Burt Lancaster, Donald Sutherland, Dominique Sanda, Sterling Hayden, and Gérard Depardieu.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

Theatre 2: "Awakenings" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)

"Hamlet" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "The Grifters" (†).

Theatre 2: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: "Green Card" (†).

Theatre 2: "Alligator Eyes" (John Feldman).

Theatre 3: "GoodFellas" (†).

Theatre 4: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: "Edward Scissorhands" (†).

Theatre 2: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.

Theatre 3: "Nothing but Trouble" (Dan Aykroyd), with Chevy Chase, Aykroyd, John Candy, and Demi Moore.

Theatre 4: "Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Theatre 5: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara.

Theatre 6: "Awakenings" (†).

Theatre 7: "The Grifters" (†).

Theatre 8: "Once Around" (Lasse Hallström), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, Danny Aiello, Laura San Giacomo, and Gena Rowlands.

Theatre 9: "The Grifters" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0600)

Theatre 1: "Perfectly Normal" (Yves Simoneau), with Robbie Coltrane.

Theatre 2: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger, Penelope Ann Miller, Pamela Reed, Linda Hunt, and Richard Tyson.

Theatre 3: (Separate admissions) "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates; and "Postcards from the Edge" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

Through Feb. 21: "Green Card" (†).

From Feb. 22: "Scenes from a Mall" (Paul Mazursky), with Bette Midler and Woody Allen.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger, Penelope Ann Miller, Pamela Reed, Linda Hunt, and Richard Tyson.

Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara.

Theatre 3: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.

Theatre 4: "Edward Scissorhands" (†).

Theatre 5: "Perfectly Normal" (Yves Simoneau), with Robbie Coltrane, Michael Riley, Deborah Duchene, Eugene Lipinski, and Kenneth Walsh.

Theatre 6: "Postcards from the Edge" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"Sleeping with the Enemy" (†).

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"The Godfather Part III" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Sheltering Sky" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"The Long Walk Home" (Richard Pearce), with Sissy Spacek and Whoopi Goldberg.

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Alice" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
(Separate admissions) "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates; and "Postcards from the Edge" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Dances with Wolves" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Awakenings" (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven; in German), with Lena Stolze.
Theatre 2: "Taxi Blues" (Pavel Lounguine; in Russian).
Theatre 3: "Ay, Carmela!" (Carlos Saura; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Once Around" (Lasse Hallström), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter, Danny Aiello, Laura San Giacomo, and Gena Rowlands.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "L.A. Story" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 21: "Hamlet" (†). From Feb. 22: "Scenes from a Mall" (Paul Mazursky), with Bette Midler and Woody Allen.
Theatre 3: "The Silence of the Lambs" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Grifters" (†).
Theatre 5: "Green Card" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Feb. 21: "Nothing but Trouble" (Dan Aykroyd), with Chevy Chase, Aykroyd, John Candy, and Demi Moore. From Feb. 22: "He Said, She Said" (Ken Kwapis and Marisa Silver), with Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins, and Sharon Stone.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.
Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.
Theatre 2: "Edward Scissorhands" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (directed by Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "The Grifters" (†).
Theatre 3: "L.A. Story" (†).
Theatre 4: "Popcorn" (Mark Herrier), with Tony Roberts.
Theatre 5: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 6: "The NeverEnding Story II The Next Chapter" (George Miller), with Jonathan Brandis.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Godfather Part III" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 21: "Eve of Destruction" (Duncan Gibbins), with Gregory Hines and Renée Soutendijk. From Feb. 22: "He Said, She Said" (Ken Kwapis and Marisa Silver), with Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins, and Sharon Stone.
Theatre 2: "Flight of the Intruder" (John Milius), with Danny Glover, Willem Dafoe, and Brad Johnson.
Theatre 3: "Ghost" (Jerry Zucker), with Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore, Whoopi Goldberg, Tony Goldwyn, Rick Aviles, and Vincent Schiavelli.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"The Silence of the Lambs" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "King Ralph" (David S. Ward), with John Goodman, Peter O'Toole, and John Hurt.
Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, and Catherine O'Hara.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Nothing but Trouble" (Dan Aykroyd), with Chevy Chase, Aykroyd, John Candy, and Demi Moore.
Theatre 2: "Run" (Geoff Burrowes), with Patrick Dempsey and Kelly Preston.

THE NEW YORKER

The second film of "Imitation of Life" (playing February 22-23 at Film Forum 2), Fannie Hurst's novel about the friendship of two widowed mothers—one white (Lana Turner) and one black (Juanita Moore)—is a B-52 tearjerker. It unloads a barrage of lonely-women crises and then doesn't let up. Douglas Sirk, the director, has become the darling of feminist and auteurist critics, who applaud his supposedly subversive handling of Universal's "women's pictures." That may come as a jolt to the millions who, in 1959, lapped up the heartbreak of Moore's daughter (Susan Kohner) trying to pass for white and Turner's daughter (Sandra Dee) falling in love with her mom's fiancé (John Gavin).

John M. Stahl directed the more genuine, straightforward 1934 original, starring Claudette Colbert as the struggling heroine and Louise Beavers as her live-in helper (playing February 20-21, also at Film Forum 2). In Stahl's film, Colbert uses Beavers' family recipe to found a booming Aunt Jemima-like pancake business. In Sirk's remake, Turner's character is an aspiring actress who ascends to Broadway stardom, and Moore is her cook and housemaid. The three-hankie situations are the same: the black daughter's attempts to disown her mother, and the emotionally martyred woman's funeral.

Sirk said the black widow would be more like "the typical Negro" if she had nothing to do with Turner's business—if she were simply "a servant, without much she could call her own." As a result, Sirk transforms Turner into the embodiment of corrupting success and Moore into the repository of spiritual virtue. His changes make the material even more *melodramatic and sentimental. Sirk strews little jokes along the way: he plants ironic titles like "Happiness" on Turner's hit shows. But mostly he gluts the drama with pathos while winking at the intelligentsia.*

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Through Feb. 19: "A Woman of Affairs" (1928, directed by Clarence Brown; silent), with Greta Garbo, John Gilbert, Lewis Stone, and John Mack Brown; and "Queen Christina" (1934, Rouben Mamoulian), with Garbo, Gilbert, and Stone.
Feb. 20-21: "Conquest" (1937, Clarence Brown), with Greta Garbo, Charles Boyer, and Maria Ouspenskaya; and "The Kiss" (1929), Jacques Feyder; silent), with Garbo, Conrad Nagel, and Lew Ayres.
Feb. 22-23: "Two-Faced Woman" (1941, George Cukor), with Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, Ruth Gordon, and Constance Bennett; and "Ninotchka" (1939, Ernst Lubitsch), with Garbo, Douglas, Ina Claire, Felix Bressart, and Sig Rumann.
Feb. 24-26: "All About Eve" (1950, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, Hugh Marlowe, Thelma Ritter, George Sanders, Celeste Holm, and Gary Merrill; and "Dramatic School" (1938, Robert L. Sinclair), with Louise Rainer, Paulette Goddard, Lana Turner, and Alan Marshal.
From Feb. 27: "Where the Sidewalk Ends" (1950, Otto Preminger), with Gene Tierney, Dana Andrews, Gary Merrill, and Karl Malden; and "Slattery's Hurricane" (1949, André de Toth), with Richard Widmark, Linda Darnell, Veronica Lake, Merrill, and John Russell.

Cinema Village, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
Through Feb. 19: "Rikyu" (Hiroshi Teshigahara; in Japanese), with Rentaro Mikuni and Tsutomu Yamazaki.
Feb. 20-23: "Kiss of the Spider Woman" (†); and "Ménage" (1986, Betrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Michel Blanc, and Miou-Miou.
Feb. 24-26: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (1990, Uli Edel), with Stephen Lang, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Burt Young, and Alexis Arquette; and "Sammy and Rosie Get Laid" (1987, Stephen Frears), with Ayub Khan Din, Francis Barber, and Shashi Kapoor.
From Feb. 27: "Henry V" (1989, Kenneth Branagh), with Branagh; and "Tom Jones" (†).

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Feb. 19: "The Member of the Wedding" (1952, Fred Zinnemann), with Ethel Waters, Julie Harris, and Brandon deWilde; and "A Raisin in the Sun" (1961, Daniel Petrie), with Sidney Poitier, Claudia McNeil, Ruby Dee, and Diana Sands.
Feb. 20-21: "Imitation of Life" (see blurb in center column); and "The Emperor Jones" (1933, Dudley Murphy), with Paul Robeson and Dudley Digges.
Feb. 22-23: "Imitation of Life" (see blurb in center column); and "Lydia Bailey" (1952, Jean Negulesco), with Anne Francis, Dale Robertson, and William Marshall.
Feb. 24-25: "Cry, the Beloved Country" (1952, Zoltán Korda), with Canada Lee, Charles Carson, and Sidney Poitier; and "Intruder in the Dust" (†).
Feb. 26-27: "The Story of a Three Day Pass" (1968, Melvin Van Peebles; in French and English), with Harry Baird and Nicole Berger; and "Watermelon Man" (1970, Van Peebles), with Godfrey Cambridge and Estelle Parsons.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Feb. 18: "Ministry of Fear" (1944, Fritz Lang), with Ray Milland, Marjorie Reynolds, and Dan Duryea; and "The Fallen Idol" (1948, Carol Reed), with Bobby Henrey, Ralph Richardson, and Michèle Morgan.
Feb. 19: "The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds" (1972, Paul Newman), with Joanne Woodward, Roberta Wallach, and Nell Potts; and "I Never Sang for My Father" (1970, Gilbert Cates), with Melvyn Douglas, Gene Hackman, Dorothy Stickney, and Estelle Parsons.
Feb. 20: "Performance" (1970, Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg), with Mick Jagger and James Fox; and "Don't Look Now" (1973, Roeg), with Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland.
Feb. 21: "Victim" (1961, Basil Dearden),

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

with Dirk Bogarde, Sylvia Syms, and Dennis Price; and "Peeping Tom" (1960, Michael Powell), with Karl Boehm and Moira Shearer.

Feb. 22-23: "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1951, Elia Kazan), with Vivien Leigh, Marlon Brando, Kim Hunter, and Karl Malden; and "The Long, Hot Summer" (†).

Feb. 24: "The Tenant" (1976, Roman Polanski), with Polanski, Isabelle Adjani, Melvyn Douglas, Jo Van Fleet, and Shelley Winters; and "Knife in the Water" (1962, Polanski; in Polish).

Feb. 25: "Colonel Redl" (1985, István Szabó; in German), with Klaus Maria Brandauer; and "Veronika Voss" (1982, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German), with Rosel Zech.

Feb. 26: "The Seven Year Itch" (1955, Billy Wilder), with Marilyn Monroe, Tom Ewell, Victor Moore, Evelyn Keyes, and Sonny Tufts; and "Some Like It Hot" (1959, Wilder), with Monroe, Tony Curtis, Jack Lemmon, and Joe E. Brown.

Feb. 27: "Portrait of Jennie" (1949, William Dieterle), with Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotten, Ethel Barrymore, and Lillian Gish; and "Duel in the Sun" (1946, King Vidor), with Jones, Gregory Peck, Cotten, Walter Huston, Charles Bickford, and Gish.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Feb. 18 at 2: "Deep Valley" (1947, directed by Jean Negulesco), with Ida Lupino, Dane Clark, and Wayne Morris. . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 2:30: A program of short films by Jon Jost. . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 5: "The Man I Love" (1946, Raoul Walsh), with Lupino, Robert Alda, and Bruce Bennett. . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 5: Another program of short films by Jost. . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 2:30: "On Dangerous Ground" (1952, Nicholas Ray), with Lupino, Robert Ryan, and Ward Bond. . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 3 and 6: "Road of Life" (1979, Nelson Pereira dos Santos; in Portuguese). Mr. Pereira dos Santos will be present at 6. . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 6 and Feb. 21 at 2:30: "The Big Knife" (1955, Robert Aldrich), with Jack Palance, Lupino, and Rod Steiger. . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 3 and 6: "Lines of Fire" (1990, Brian Beker), a documentary. . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at 6: "While the City Sleeps" (1956, Fritz Lang), with Dana Andrews, Lupino, and Vincent Price. . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 2, Feb. 23 at 4, and Feb. 24 at 1: Academy Award-nominated films for documentary short film, animated short film, and live-action short film. . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 2:30: "Spellbound" (1945, Alfred Hitchcock), with Ingrid Bergman, Gregory Peck, and Leo G. Carroll. . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 6: "Dreams That Money Can Buy" (1947, Hans Richter). . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 6, Feb. 23 at 2, Feb. 24 at 5, and Feb. 26 at 3 and 6: Five different programs of Ida Lupino television films. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 2: "Ivan the Terrible, Part I" (1943, Sergei Eisenstein; in Russian), with Nikolai Cherkassov. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 5: "Casablanca" (1942, Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, and Claude Rains. . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 2: "Dreams That Money Can Buy." . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 5: "Spellbound." . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 2: "Casablanca." . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 5: "Ivan the Terrible, Part I." . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 2:30: "Brief Encounter" (1945, David Lean), with Celia Johnson, Trevor Howard, and Stanley Holloway. . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 6: "The Raven" (1943, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Pierre Fresnay.

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—Programs about contemporary comedians and people who influenced them. Whoopi Goldberg: Feb. 19-23: Excerpts from Goldberg's television appearances; "Mirror Image" (1960, CBS), an episode of "The Twilight Zone," with Vera Miles; and excerpts from other shows that influenced Goldberg. . . . Joe Piscopo: From Feb. 26: "The Joe Piscopo Special" (1984, HBO); and clips of Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, and Jerry Lewis. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15. . . . ¶ James Dean television appearances. Feb. 19-23: "Hill Number One" (1951), an episode of "Family Theater," with Roddy McDowall and Ruth Hussey. . . . From Feb. 26: "The Thief" (1955, ABC), an episode of "U.S. Steel Hour," with Mary Astor; and "I'm a Fool" (1954, CBS), an episode of "General Electric Theater," with Natalie Wood and Eddie Albert. Showings Tuesdays through Saturdays at 2. . . . ¶ "On Stage at Carnegie Hall: A Centennial Celebration." Feb. 19-23: "Vladimir Horowitz at Carnegie Hall" (1968, CBS); and "In Celebration of the Piano" (1988, PBS), with Van Cliburn. . . . From Feb. 26: "ASCAP and Carnegie Hall Celebrate Irving Berlin's 100th Birthday" (1988, CBS). Showings Tuesdays at 2:30 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 2:30.

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Feb. 20 at 8, Feb. 22 at 10, Feb. 23 at 6, Feb. 24 at 9:30, and Feb. 27-28 at 8:30: Six different programs of Stan Brakhage films. . . . ¶ Feb. 21-23 at 8, Feb. 24 at 6, and Feb. 27-28 at 7: "At the Crossroads—Jews in Eastern Europe" (1990, Oren Rudavsky and Yale Strom), a documentary. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 10 and Feb. 24 at 8: A program of films by Chris Kraus and Lisa Squire.

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Feb. 19 at noon: "Go Tell It on the Mountain" (1984, Stan Lathan). . . . ¶ Feb. 19 at 2:30; "Princess Tam Tam" (1935, Edmond T. Grénville; in French), with Josephine Baker and Albert Préjan. . . . ¶ Feb. 21 at noon: "Law and Order" (1969, Frederick Wiseman). . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at noon: "To Be Young, Gifted, and Black" (1972, Michael A. Schultz). . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 2:30: "Cissy Houston: Sweet Inspiration" (1987, David Davidson) and ". . . But Then, She's Betty Carter" (1980, Michelle Parkerson).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"From Harlem to Hollywood: The 1970s New Black Cinema." Feb. 23 at 2: "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song" (1971, Melvin Van Peebles), with Van Peebles and Rhetta Hughes. . . . ¶ Feb. 23 at 4: "The Spook Who Sat by the Door" (1973, Ivan Dixon), with Lawrence Cook and Paul Kelly. . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 2: "Coffy" (1973, Jack Hill), with Pam Grier. . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 4: "Mandingo" (1975, Richard Fleischer), with James Mason, Perry King, and Ken Norton.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Starting Feb. 22: Programs of videotapes made by, or starring, Andy Warhol. Showings Tuesdays at 2, 3:30, and 6:30; Wednesdays through Saturdays at noon, 1:30, and 3:30; and Sundays at 1, 2:30, and 4:30.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Feb. 20 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "A Flame in My Heart" (1987, Alain Tanner; in French), with Myriam Mézières. . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Mama, There's a Man in Your Bed" (1989, Coline Serreau; in French), with Daniel Auteuil, Firmine Richard, and Maxime Leroux.

Collective for Living Cinema, 41 White St. (925-2111)—Through Feb. 23: "H-2 Worker" (Stephanie Black), a documentary. (Showings Monday through Friday at 7 and 9, and Saturday at 4:30, 7:30, and 9.)

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Feb. 22 at 1 and 4:30: "Joe's Bedstuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads" (1983, Spike Lee); "Def by Temptation" (1990, James Bond III), with Kadeem Hardison, Rony Clanton, and Bill Nunn; "Making 'Do the Right Thing' " (1989, St. Clair Bourne), a documentary; and "Drop Squad: The Session" (1989, Butch Robinson and David Johnson), with Eric Payne. . . . ¶ Feb. 22 at 6:30: "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song" (1971, Melvin Van Peebles), with Van Peebles and Rhetta Hughes; and "The Education of Sonny Carson" (1974, Michael Campus), with Rony Clanton, Don Gordon, Paul Benjamin, and Mary Alice.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, 5th Ave. at 81st St. (879-5500)—Feb. 23 at 4 and 6:30: "Aelita, Queen of Mars" (1924, Yakov Protazanov; a Russian silent film).

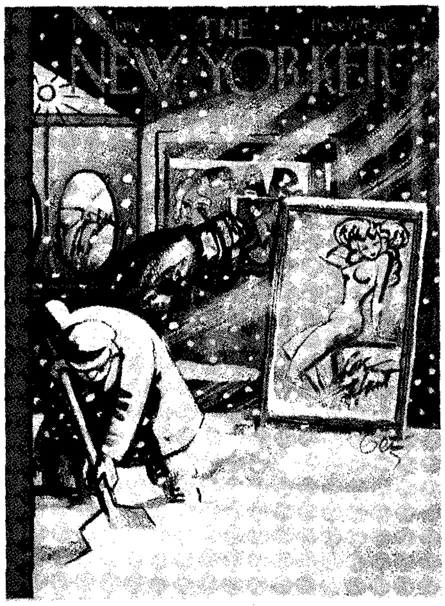
IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Alice—Woody Allen's latest picture is an awkward blend of whimsy and moralizing. The title character, played by Mia Farrow, is a pampered Upper East Side lady-who-lunches. She lives in a huge apartment with her handsome husband (William Hurt), her adorable children, and a staff, and she looks terrific. But her life, the movie tells us, is totally empty and false. A Chinatown doctor (Keye Luke) gives her a variety of herbal remedies to knock the yuppie malaise out of her system. One of them makes her invisible; one makes her irresistible to men; and so on. As these fantasy episodes mount up, Alice begins to see how artificial her life is, how far she's strayed from the pure ideals of her Catholic girlhood, how much more love she needs than she has been getting, and what a revolting piece of Wasp slime her husband is. In the end, the heroine seems, incredibly, to have redeemed herself through self-absorption; the movie doesn't benefit from any such miracle. Although there are more jokes here than in any of Allen's last few features, the picture isn't really a comedy; it's a sermon with gags. The large cast also includes Joe Mantegna, Alec Baldwin, Blythe Danner, Judy Davis, Bob Balaban, and Bernadette Peters (who does a sensational brief turn as a cynical muse).—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/31/90.) (Loews Fine Arts.)



Awakenings—This adaptation of Oliver Sacks' account of the awakening of post-encephalitic patients who had been "living statues" for decades is persuasive in its own terms, but it's also a near-perfect example of Hollywoodization. In the book, Sacks, the fabulist of illness, is drawn into his patients' aberrant states—he sees their abnormalities as brilliantly unique forms of consciousness to be charted. In the movie, the director, Penny Marshall, works the audience. She keeps zapping us to feel the humanistic, the obvious; her forte is to make blandness ring true. The movie is all about the doctor (Robin Williams) being a caring individual; Sacks, who's sensitized to prodigious kinds of experience, is turned into an absent-minded professor banging his head. As for Robert De Niro, who's the prize patient—well, when you're playing a silent, somnolent person who wakes up and soon after erupts into madness, you certainly give the impression that you're acting. As the head nurse—a role that's an embarrassment—Julie Kavner still manages to give the best performance. With the frail octogenarian Ruth Nelson as De Niro's mother, and John Heard, Penelope Ann Miller, Max von Sydow, and a large cast that includes Judith Malina, Richard Libertini, Laura Esterman, Anne Meara, Mary Cathe-

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rine Wright, Alice Drummond, Keith Diamond, Peter Stormare, and Dexter Gordon. The screenplay is by Steven Zaillian; the syrupy music is by Randy Newman.—P.K. (2/11/91) (34th St. East, Baronet, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Dances with Wolves—Set during the Civil War, this big Indians-versus-Cavalry epic is like a New Age social-studies lesson. Kevin Costner, who directed and is the star, has an untroubled face and laid-back diction. As Lieutenant Dunbar, a Union officer, he sees that the Sioux have a superior culture and he changes sides. This is a nature-boy movie, a kid's daydream of being an Indian. When Dunbar has become a Sioux named Dances with Wolves, he writes in his journal that he knows for the first time who he really is. Costner has feathers in his hair and feathers in his head. He and his friend Michael Blake (who worked up the material with him in mind and then wrote the novel and the screenplay) are trying to show the last years of the Sioux as an independent nation from the Sioux point of view, and it's probably that sympathy for the Indians that the audience responds to. But Costner is a moviemaking novice: instead of helping us understand the Sioux, he simply makes the Sioux like genial versions of us. This three-hour Western weeper, with its sluggish action and poorly shaped scenes, was made by a bland megalomaniac. (The Indians should have named him Plays with Camera.) Shot in South Dakota; the wide-screen cinematography, by Dean Semier, is spacious and open at times, and there are fine images of buffalo pounding by. With Mary McDonnell, Maury Chaykin, Robert Pastorelli, Graham Greene as Kicking Bird, and Rodney A. Grant as Wind in His Hair.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount.)

Edward Scissorhands—A Transylvanian castle rises high in the air out of the end of a bare, flat suburban street. One day, Peg Boggs, the Avon lady (Dianne Wiest, magically daffy), makes a call on the macabre, tumbledown place and discovers an adolescent fairy-tale boy, white-faced Edward (Johnny Depp), with two collections of long, sharp shears where his hands should be. (He was created in the castle's kitchen workshop by an aged inventor—Vincent Price, in flashbacks—who died before he could attach the hands he had prepared.) Peg invites the boy to come home with her. At first, this movie, directed by Tim Burton, has a lovely comic spirit, but when the suburbanites think Edward is dangerous and turn against him, the material turns into cheesy, plot-centered melodrama. It has a central flaw: the idea of a boy who cuts when he wants to touch is preinterpreted. He's the pure creative artist who can't be around people because he can't help hurting them; he's the woeful misunderstood kid. Edward is an emasculated Tim Burton —he's Burton saying, "I've always been a sweet guy." (The picture becomes Christmassy and angelic.) With Winona Ryder.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Olympia.)

The Godfather Part III—Lightning didn't strike three times. It's a big, ambitious project, and it looks like the first two "Godfather" movies, but the internal force has vanished, and the quality of feeling—what gave the films their lyricism and made the public bond with them —is gone. In the first two pictures the director, Francis Ford Coppola, took opportunistic, sensationalist material and turned it into drama. Now he doesn't transform the sensationalist material (the Corleones' involvement in Vatican swindles); he just presents it, with an aura of solemnity. With Al Pacino as the morose godfather, Andy Garcia as his successor, and Diane Keaton, Talia Shire, Eli Wallach, Joe Mantegna, Donal Donnelly, Raf Vallone, Bridget Fonda, Sofia Coppola, George Hamilton, Franc D'Ambrosio, and Helmut Berger. Written by the director and Mario Puzo.—P.K. (1/14/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews Festival, and Embassy 1. . . . ¶ Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, and U. A. East; through Feb. 21.)

GoodFellas—The director, Martin Scorsese, gives you a lift. He loves the Brooklyn organized-crime milieu, because it's where distortion, hyperbole, and exuberance all commingle. The movie is about being cock of the walk, with banners flying and crowds cheering. Based on Nicholas Pileggi's nonfiction book "Wiseguy," it's a triumphant piece of filmmaking—journalism and sociology presented with the brio of drama. But the three major hoods, played by Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro, and Joe Pesci, don't have a strong enough presence, and the movie lacks the juice and richness that come with major performances. (It's like the Howard Hawks "Scarface" without Scarface.) What you respond to is Scorsese's bravura: the filmmaking process becomes the subject of the movie. Watching it is like getting strung out on pure sensation. Paul Sorvino as Paulie and Lorraine Bracco as Karen both come through, and other performers in minor roles give the movie a frenzied, funny texture. The screenplay is by Pileggi and Scorsese; the cinematography is by Michael Ballhaus; the editing is by Thelma Schoonmaker.—P.K. (9/24/90) (Eastside Cinema, Quad Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Green Card—A limp, dispirited romantic comedy, written and directed by Peter Weir. A rather prissy horticulturist (Andie MacDowell) agrees to an in-name-only marriage to a Frenchman (Gérard Depardieu); he needs a green card to stay in New York, and she needs to show that she's married in order to get past the stuffy co-op board of the building in which she wants to buy an apartment. They meet (for the first time) at City Hall, do the deed, and separate, until several months later, when they're forced to pretend that their union is real—that they aren't strangers but devoted partners who know every little thing about each other. This is a serviceable premise for a screwball comedy, but the screwball is apparently not one of Weir's best pitches: the movie is as flat and lifeless as a hanging curve. Depardieu—as shaggy and hefty as ever—is a skillful comedian, and he looks as if he's having a great time. Not even his vivid presence is enough to rescue this wan little picture. Also with Bebe Neuwirth and Gregg Edelman.—T.R. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Quad Cinema, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Cinema I, and Guild; through Feb. 21. . . . ¶ Cinema II; starting Feb. 22.)

The Grifters—This adaptation of one of the punchier pulp novels by Jim Thompson retains Thompson's hardboiled pitilessness. It's about three scam artists: tough, seductive Lilly (Anjelica Huston); her son, Roy (John Cusack), who won't have anything to do with her; and his bubbly bedmate, Myra (Annette Bening), a sex fantasy come to luscious life. These chisellers never got a break and don't give anybody else a break. The director, Stephen Frears, and the scriptwriter, Donald E. Westlake, are smart enough not to attempt to make a big thing out of this L.A. film noir. They keep it snappy, and heighten the sexual electricity. And they smack us with discord; we're watching a form of cabaret. Huston is astounding; you can see why the son is getting even with her by throwing his life away, and Bening's two-faced little-girl quality is just what film noir thrives on. (This is a picture with two competing femmes fatales.) It's thin stuff, but it's pretty terrific. (It even has great opening titles.) With Pat Hingle giving the performance of his life.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Bay Cinema, Coronet, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Hamlet—Franco Zeffirelli gives Shakespeare's tragedy the ripping-yarns treatment: a dashing star (Mel Gibson); lavish sets and costumes; a generous amount of swordplay and leaping about; and just enough text to enable the audience to follow the story. Zeffirelli and his co-screenwriter, Christopher De Vore, have cut the play to an acceptable prestige-picture running time of two hours and fifteen minutes; you get the feeling that they would have eliminated Hamlet's tortured, action-retarding soliloquies if they could have done so without losing all those famous lines. The movie isn't exactly dull, but it doesn't feel like "Hamlet," either. The play's alternating rhythms of action and reflection have been flattened to a single tempo, brisk but monotonous. Gibson's performance is competent and enjoyable. He isn't interesting, though, and that's probably not entirely his fault—the intellectual vacuity of the production leaves him stranded. Among the all-star supporting cast, Ian Holm (as Polonius) and Paul Scofield (as the ghost of Hamlet's father) do the best work. Also with Glenn Close (as Gertrude) and Helena Bonham-Carter (as Ophelia). Cinematography by David Watkin. —T.R. (Murray Hill Cinemas, 68th St. Playhouse, and 8th St. Playhouse. . . . ¶ Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through Feb. 21.)

Intruder in the Dust (1949)—Lucas Beauchamp, the "stubborn and insufferable" hero of William Faulkner's novel, is a black man who enrages the white people in his corner of Mississippi by his refusal to play nigger for them. The director, Clarence Brown, shot this movie in Faulkner's home town—Oxford, Mississippi—with the inhabitants in bit parts and in the crowd scenes. "All in all, I think it is a good movie," Faulkner said at the première, and it *is* a good movie—straightforward, tense, and assured. (It is perhaps Brown's finest picture.) As in the novel, inflexible Lucas (Juano Hernández), who refuses to accept condescension or patronage, is conceived as a focus of white ambivalence. The other major character is Chick (Claude Jarman, Jr.), a white boy who has made the stupid mistake of offering Lucas money as payment for hospitality and is humiliated by Lucas's stony refusal. When Lucas is arrested for murder and the townspeople get their chance to turn him into a nigger, Chick finds his opportunity to discharge his debt—by saving Lucas's life. At the very end, a false note is struck by Chick's uncle (David Brian): "It will be all right, as long as some of us are willing to fight—even one of us," and the ultimate cliché, "Lucas wasn't in trouble; *we* were in trouble." It's the movie that gets in trouble. But Hernández's Lucas has the intensity and humor to transcend these Northern liberal platitudes. With Porter Hall, Elizabeth Patterson, Will Geer, and Charles Kemper. The screenplay is by Ben Maddow, with some tinkering by Faulkner (who also helped scout locations); cinematography by Robert Surtees.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Feb. 24-25.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman (1985)—Set in a nameless South American country, Hector Babenco's film version of Manuel Puig's famous novel is about a homosexual window dresser, Molina (William Hurt), and a revolutionary, Valentín (Raul Julia), who share a prison cell. Molina tries to comfort Valentín and help him forget his pain and misery by telling him the stories of old movies. Hurt is just about the only thing to look at; he's very likable in the scenes where Molina reveals his tenderness and warmth and humor, and the picture can work on audiences in the way that "Midnight Cowboy" did back in 1969. (The times having changed, it can make explicit what was potential in that earlier relationship.) But it's a slack piece of moviemaking, and as sentimental as the forties screen romances that Molina is infatuated with; that is to say, it moves an audience at the obvious points. The novel is a sly celebration of the seductive, consoling power of movies; Babenco reaches for something larger, something aggressively moral. Valentín, a Marxist prig and a puritan about pleasure, learns humility and becomes more of a man through his close friendship with the sweetly maternal Molina. And Molina is transfigured through the power of love and happiness and a new self-respect. This Brazilian production, made in English, was shot in São Paulo; the screenplay is by Leonard Schrader.—P.K. (Cinema Village; Feb. 20-23.)

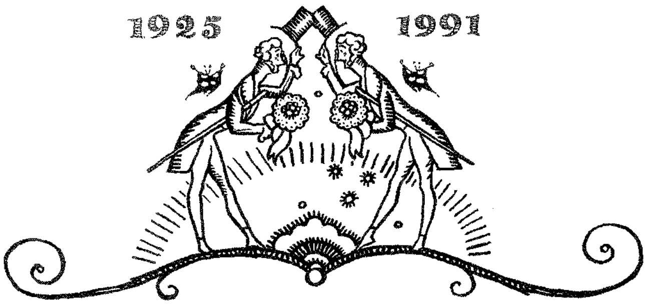
L.A. Story—Steve Martin wrote and stars in this romantic comedy—a take on "Annie Hall" that turns it inside out. What Martin loves about L.A. is what Woody Allen rejected it for: its pleasure-loving, materialistic irresponsibleness. For Martin, who grew up in Southern California, superficiality is the norm. This movie is totally inconsequential, and he accepts that—it doesn't bother him. As a clowning TV weatherman, Martin is split between his wonder-struck obsession with a British journalist, played by Victoria Tennant, and the carefree high of sex without love, represented by a bouncy nymph played (wonderfully) by Sarah Jessica Parker. The jokes spin by as if choreographed by summer breezes. If some of them aren't quite fresh, the movie is such a silly, light-headed joyride that you don't really mind. With a batch of sharp performers: Rick Moranis (uncredited), Marilu Henner as a tough dame with a cold stare, Susan Forristal as Martin's pal, M. C. Shan as a waiter-rapper, and Richard E. Grant, Kevin Pollak, and Patrick Stewart, among others. Artfully directed by the English TV ace Mick Jackson; with cinematography by Andrew Dunn, editing by Richard A. Harris, and a funny, lilting score by Peter Melnick.—P.K. (2/11/91) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Long, Hot Summer (1958)—This amalgam of Faulkner's stories "Barn Burning" and "Spotted Horses" (which is part of his novel "The Hamlet") turned out to be highly commercial and hugely entertaining. The setting is a Mississippi town run by Will Varner (Orson Welles); Paul Newman plays Ben Quick, the stud drifter who comes into town and makes a deal with Varner to marry his tough-minded, virgin schoolteacher daughter (Joanne Woodward). Quick is one of those arrogant-on-the-outside, vulnerable-on-the-inside roles that Newman could do better than any other movie actor, and he and Woodward have some electric, strong scenes together. Martin Ritt directed from a crackerjack popular screenplay by Irving Ravetch and his wife, Harriet Frank, Jr. (In 1945, Faulkner had worked on a screen treatment of "Barn Burning," but nothing came of it.) With Angela Lansbury, Lee Remick, Anthony Franciosa, and Richard Anderson.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 22-23.)

Mr. & Mrs. Bridge—An adaptation, by the Merchant-Ivory team (the director James Ivory, the producer Ismail Merchant, and the writer Ruth Prawer Jhabvala), of Evan S. Connell's novels about the painfully respectable Bridge family of Kansas City. Walter and India Bridge (Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward) are pure exemplars of the middle: they're middle-aged and middle-class; they live in a medium-sized city in virtually the dead center of the United States; and they are neither truly happy nor consciously unhappy. They're monsters of moderation. At the beginning of the film, Ivory seems eerily in tune with the novels' distinctive sensibility. The picture gets by, initially, on its strange mood of chilling coziness, and when we tire of that—and we do, because it doesn't change or develop—the actors keep us engaged a while longer. Newman doesn't try to soften the character, or to distance himself from it with exaggerated effects, and his scrupulousness pays off. The character seems not more likable but more human than it does in the novels; by very simple means, Newman enables us to understand Mr. Bridge's insensitivity and emotional ineptitude. And Woodward, too, gives a delicate, subtle performance; she embodies a foolish woman vividly and unpatronizingly. But the screenplay retains the static quality of the books' construction, so at a certain point the scenes begin to feel arbitrary. And Ivory's perspective on the material seems to become clouded by a storm of minutiae—a surfeit of period detail. (The action takes place in the late thirties and early forties.) In the end, the Bridges aren't large enough either to move us or to terrify us; they're the Ambersons without the magnificence. Also with Blythe Danner, Kyra Sedgwick, Robert Sean Leonard, Margaret Welsh, and Simon Callow.—T.R. (12/3/90) (Cinema II; through Feb. 21. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas, and Cinema 3rd Avenue; starting Feb. 22.)

Postcards from the Edge—This tale of a sorrowful, wisecracking starlet (Meryl Streep) whose brassy, boozing former-star mother (Shirley MacLaine) started her on sleeping pills when she was nine is camp without the zest of camp. It's camp played borderline straight—a druggy-Cinderella movie about an unformed girl who has to go past despair to find herself. The director, Mike Nichols, is a parodist who feigns sincerity, and his tone keeps slipping around. What's clear is that we're meant to be enthralled by the daughter's radiant face, her refinement, her honesty. Nichols keeps the camera on Streep as if to prove that he can make her a popular big star—a new Crawford or Bette Davis. (She remains distant, emotionally atonal.) The tacky, bright-colored film—a near-plotless version of a woman's picture—is weightless, yet it's watchable. Its jadedness appeals to the narcissism of show-biz insiders and to the would-be insider in the rest of us. (Nichols is acclaimed for being hip to the Zeitgeist.) There are a lot of people to look at: Gene Hackman, Dennis Quaid, Richard Dreyfuss, Annette Bening, Robert Bartlett, CCH Pounder, Oliver Platt, Gary Morton, Mary Wickes, Rob Reiner, Simon Callow, Michael Ontkean, Pepe Serna, and Dana Ivey. The screenplay, by Carrie Fisher (with Nichols' uncredited collaboration), is based on her novel; cinematography by Michael Ballhaus.—P.K. (10/22/90) (23rd St. West Triplex, Worldwide Cinemas, and Cinema 3.)

Reversal of Fortune—An entertainingly trashy sick-joke docudrama about how Claus von Bülow's conviction for trying to kill his superrich wife was overturned on appeal through the brainpower of the Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and his team of students and former students. Jeremy Irons' von Bülow is a pop conception of a decadent aristocrat, and the crowd-pleasing satirical subtext is that the heirs and heiresses of the great fortunes are useless, bored, unloving, and unloved. The fun here is that Irons' performance is a masterly conceit. His von Bülow is a depraved cuckoo; he simply can't resist playing ghoulish comedian and making Dershowitz (Ron Silver) his stooge. The script, by Nicholas Kazan, is skillfully constructed, but it's based on Dershowitz's book about the case, and he's the protagonist—the crusading lawyer searching for evidence of innocence. Silver's Dershowitz seems to be overdosing on proud sentimental Jewishness. (That this is a positive stereotype makes it no less a stereotype.) The direction, by Barbet Schroeder, is assured but often impersonal and emptily energetic. With Glenn Close (very effective as Sunny Von Bülow, the comatose narrator), Christine Baranski as Andrea Reynolds, Julie Hagerty (uncredited) as Alexandra Isles, and Stephen Mailer, Annabella Sciorra, Uta Hagen, and Fisher Stevens. Music by Mark Isham.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Quad Cinema. . . . ¶ Cinema 3rd Avenue; through Feb. 21.)



Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead—With Gary Oldman, Tim Roth, and Richard Dreyfuss; directed by Tom Stoppard. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

The Sheltering Sky—Published in 1949, Paul Bowles' semi-autobiographical account of his marriage fascinated readers by its Olympian closeted tone. Under the novel's vaporousness is a pop theme: what happens to a modern, dissatisfied woman—a New York artist-intellectual—if she's in the Sahara, her husband dies, and she's enslaved in a harem? But this is not simply a male writer's version of a woman's harem-whore fantasy; the wife, Kit, seems to be fulfilling the nature and desires that the husband, Port, cannot fulfill for himself. Bernardo Bertolucci's attenuated film version filters out the pop element that gives the book its bit of kicky horror. The movie is about Kit (Debra Winger) giving over to another way of seeing; it's about the shift in her psyche as she becomes a contented love slave and moves away from the verbal, from definitions and categories and neuroses. Bertolucci appears to have lost interest in pace and excitement and verve; he goes deep into monotony. (The whole thing has the impressively decadent look of an Armani ad.) With John Malkovich as Port (who's full of smug self-hatred), Campbell Scott as Tunner, Jill Bennett, Timothy Spall, and Bowles (at seventy-nine) as some sort of presiding expatriate sage.—P.K. (12/17/90) (57th St. Playhouse.)

The Silence of the Lambs—With Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins, and Scott Glenn; directed by Jonathan Demme. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Waverly, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

Sleeping with the Enemy—Julia Roberts, as a frightened young wife who fakes her death and changes her identity to escape her rich husband (Patrick Bergin), a psychopathic perfectionist. Roberts is an incredible object—you can at least see why a perfectionist would want to hang on to her. But she's a blank goddess here, and the settings—Cape Cod and Cedar Falls, Iowa (both shot in North and South Carolina)—are uninspiring. The director, Joseph Ruben, does a smooth job, with snappy editing every time there's a cut to the enraged husband on the wife's trail. There are no surprise twists, though; the picture is a glossy combination of secondhand, showing-off-Julia scenes from "Pretty Woman" and secondhand scares from "The Stepfather." Ronald Bass's script, out of a novel by Nancy Price, is one letdown after another. With Kevin Anderson, Elizabeth Lawrence, and Nancy Fish. The score, by Jerry Goldsmith, keeps plugging away at ominousness.—P.K. (2/11/91) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

Tom Jones (1963)—Tony Richardson whizzes through the Henry Fielding novel, but he pauses long enough for a great lewd eating scene. With Albert Finney as the foundling hero, Hugh Griffith, Joyce Redman, Edith Evans, Joan Greenwood, Susannah York, Diane Cilento, David Warner, Wilfrid Lawson, Rachel Kempson, and George Devine. The script is by John Osborne.—P.K. (Cinema Village; starting Feb. 27.)

The Vanishing—George Sluizer's film has a simple, powerful thriller hook: a young Dutch woman, Saskia (the radiant Johanna Ter Steege), vacationing in the South of France with her boyfriend, Rex (Gene Bervoets), walks into a highway rest stop to buy soda and beer and never comes back. Rex's search for Saskia, which takes place over several years, produces suspense of an unusually melancholy kind. This fiendishly intelligent little movie is adapted from a novel called "The Golden Egg," by the Dutch writer Tim Krabbé (who collaborated with Sluizer on the adaptation), and its form is essentially literary. It's a sophisticated example of the sort of hermetic intellectual mysteries that Borges is famous for; the fates of Saskia and Rex are worked out with an almost geometric precision. But the movie's rigor isn't alienating, and its symmetries are evocative rather than merely clever. This film is about ordinary lives interrupted, hijacked out of time, and Sluizer, with documentary-style attentiveness to detail, does justice to the varied beauty of ordinariness. The narrative is constructed with flawless elegance, but the movie is far less self-contained than it seems: traces of deep feeling keep escaping from the artifice, like puffs of breath into cold, thin air, and these wispy, ephemeral indications of unself-conscious life haunt us when the story is over. Not many thrillers have the sort of suggestiveness this picture has. It's a small classic. Bernard-Pierre Donnadieu gives a chilling performance as the perverse, enigmatic villain. In Dutch and French.—T.R. (1/28/91) (Cinema 12.)

Vincent & Theo—The director, Robert Altman, and the screenwriter, Julian Mitchell, give us an interpretation of the bond that helps to keep Vincent alive while it tears Theo apart. Vincent is obsessive about his painting; Theo is obsessive about Vincent and about his own inability to sell Vincent's work and help him—he can give him only a pittance. This double Passion-play movie is very different from other Altman movies (even allowing for how different they are from each other). The theme—the bitter entanglement of art and commerce—is Altman's lifelong theme, and, staying with it strictly in terms of the van Gogh brothers, he's able to release his own feelings about how an artist's frustrations lead him to acts of self-destructive fury—cutting off his ear to spite his face. It's a movie about two sensualists made by a sensualist, who understands that their bond of love of art is also a bond of shared rage at the world of commerce. This daring film works on its own relentless, celebratory terms. With Tim Roth, whose acting is a form of kinetic discharge, as Vincent and Paul Rhys as Theo. The cinematography is by Jean Lepine, the production design is by Stephen Altman, the score is by Gabriel Yared; all three rise to the occasion.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Angelika Film Center.)

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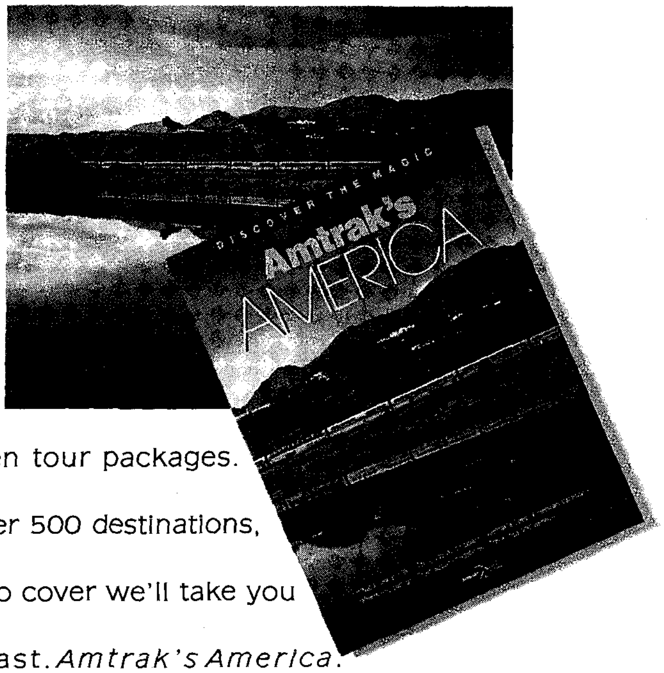

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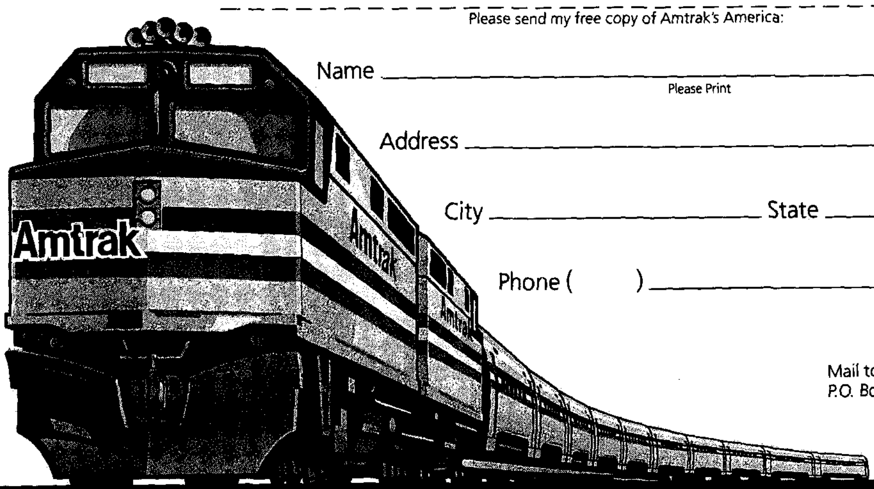

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THE NEW YORKER

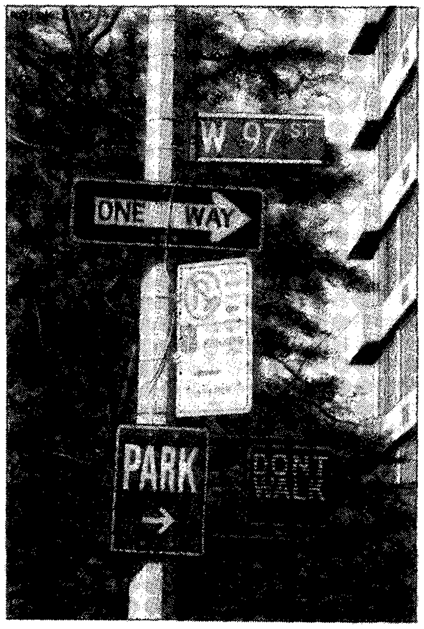
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

THE question of civilian casualties moved briefly to the forefront of the war news last week, only to be displaced by the story that in wartime always comes first: the prospect of peace. On Wednesday, a group of Western journalists filed reports from the scene of what Iraqi authorities said was an air-raid shelter in which hundreds of women, children, and elderly men had been killed by American bombs. TV audiences were warned in advance about "graphic pictures" showing, in the words of one correspondent, "a grotesque procession of incinerated people being brought to the surface." American officials were on the air within hours with maps and photographs to support their claim that the supposed shelter was really a "command-and-control facility," and Marlin Fitzwater, the White House spokesman, reiterated that American policy was "to hit only military targets." But there was no calling back the banner headlines or the dreadful images the story had generated.

A few days earlier, President Bush had accused Saddam Hussein of "cranking out myths and falsehoods" about the extent of civilian suffering, and people close to the Administration had been busy denouncing CNN's Peter Arnett for his reports of bombed-out buildings and burned children in Basra, and of the destruction of an infant-formula factory that was or wasn't in the additional business of making biological weapons. The shelter story prompted a new round of criticism of the press from government officials, who were clearly worried about how Americans would react not only to the most recent news but to the larger issue.

In wartime, things are done with little or no reference to costs that would normally strike people as important, or even prohibitive, and until comparatively recently civilian casualties behind enemy lines fell into this category. During the Vietnam War, however, images of napalmed children and the story of the My Lai massacre helped persuade Americans to question the policy that had brought about such a war, and—to this nation's credit—the issue of civilian casualties went on to become one of the considerations that citizens and public officials alike instinctively raise. In the case of the Gulf War and last week's revelations, though, much of the discussion seemed strangely off base—focussed on the truth or falsity of conflicting claims rather than on the reality of civilian deaths. No thinking American believes that the United States and its allies are trying to strike civilian shelters, infant-formula factories, or any other sites that have no apparent bearing on Iraq's military capacity. Nor does anyone doubt that we have used remarkably sophisticated guidance systems in the effort to strike only military targets. If the air attacks have hit a shelter or an infant-formula factory, it is because of faulty intelligence or errant bombs—an inevitable aspect of war, no matter how "surgically" it is waged.



Perry Smith, a retired general who is now a CNN analyst, recently painted a picture of the evolution of modern warfare toward ever greater precision and care. The Gulf War, he said, would "set a new standard" in avoiding civilian casualties. He failed to point out that the development of air war has vastly increased the danger of such casualties, and that the latest advances in weaponry are merely a small countertrend within the larger trend. Air war that is aimed at the kind of nationwide disruption the allies have been seeking is exactly the type of war in which civilians are most at risk. General Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of American forces in the Gulf, has expressed his desire to achieve "a successful conclusion for my country . . . with the absolute minimum loss of human life," adding, "And I apply that to both my troops and my enemy." But he has not denied that many of the chosen targets are situated near schools, mosques, and hospitals. Nor has he claimed that even the smartest bombs will always strike their targets.

In the Gulf War, the sheer number of targets—and sorties—has made large-scale civilian damage inevitable. On February 5th, the Los Angeles *Times* published an article by a correspondent in Amman, Jordan—Mark Fineman—who, on the strength of refugees' testimony, described the Iraqi city of Basra as "a hellish nightmare of fires and smoke so dense that . . . the sun hasn't been clearly visible for several days at a time." In Baghdad, warehouses "full of everything from medicine to the machinery of war" had been destroyed, he wrote, and so had "entire city blocks in civilian neighborhoods." Last week, another correspondent in Amman—Nora Boustany, of the Washington *Post*—reported that hospital conditions in Baghdad had "returned to the Middle Ages," because of "power cuts, fuel and water shortages, a lack of blood for transfusions and a dearth of life-saving antibiotics." And Jonathan Randal, a *Post* reporter in Iran, quoted a Kurdish guerrilla leader as estimating that allied bombing had killed or wounded "about three thousand civilians" in the Kurdish part of Iraq alone. (Because of his hatred for the Iraqi government, he was of two minds about the bombing raids. "A slaughtered sheep does not suffer by being skinned," he said.)

Although our military leaders have been careful from the beginning not to make any predictions about casualties on either side, our dazzling new weaponry and the upbeat commentary of the opening days of the war made it easy to imagine that we had witnessed the birth of a new epoch in the history of warfare. Not only would the United States escape "another Vietnam" in the sense of avoiding a long conflict with heavy American losses but, so it briefly appeared, we might be able to take comfort in the knowledge that we had not rained inadvertent destruction on large numbers of noncombatants. Last week, that comfort evaporated, and it began to look as if the war that Americans had been backing might not be the one going on in the Gulf but one that had existed only in their imaginations.

Many people believe that pictures like those taken at the scene of last Wednesday's bombing should be considered inadmissible evidence in popular discourse about war. Such pictures have grown so easy to obtain, however, that we will almost certainly never again have the luxury of taking part in a war while keeping its most unpleasant consequences out of sight. What we cannot yet know is whether these scenes of suffering will make us more reluctant to go to war in the future, and more determined to end this one as quickly as possible, or whether repeated exposure will merely numb us and further encourage a certain armchair view of war, to which this nation, having fought all its recent wars far from its own borders, seems peculiarly susceptible.

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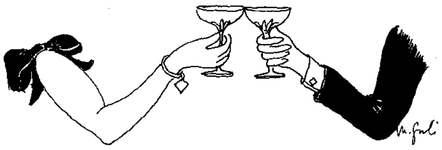
God's Love We Deliver

WE followed our nose down to the basement rooms of the West-Park Presbyterian Church, at Amsterdam and Eighty-sixth Street, on a recent chilly morning, and found a busy crew ladling out portions of soup into takeout containers, filling other containers with poached salmon and rice, packing the containers into large brown insulated hampers, stacking the hampers on hand trucks, and maneuvering them out past white-coated deliverymen bringing in fresh supplies. After a quick peek into a clean but crowded kitchen, we retired to a relatively quiet corner to wait for a chance to talk with Ganga Stone, the founder and head of God's Love We Deliver, Inc., which daily prepares more than three hundred meals like those we saw, and serves them to homebound people with AIDS.

Ganga, who soon appeared, dressed in a green-and-navy plaid suit with a long skirt, and wearing a button with the message "Service Is Joy," has short blond hair and green eyes, and looks exactly like the sort of person you might have wished for as your second-grade teacher—perfectly sensible, but with plenty of leeway for fun. She immediately took us back upstairs and outside to admire a conveyor belt that carries the hampers up to street level, and also several vans that were waiting to deliver the hampers to individual clients and to a network of distribution centers in the five boroughs and in Jersey City and Hoboken.

After that, we settled down in Ganga's office, which is something like a nook or cranny with a door, and which smelled faintly of incense. She told us she is a devotee of Swami Muktananda, an Indian guru in the Siddha Yoga tradition, who travelled widely in the West for some years before his death, in 1982. "I've always been attracted to working with dying people, since it seems to me that there's no more important moment in a human life than that one," Ganga said. "Everything else can go badly, but if that moment goes well it seems to make a difference, and I wanted to make a difference in those moments for people."



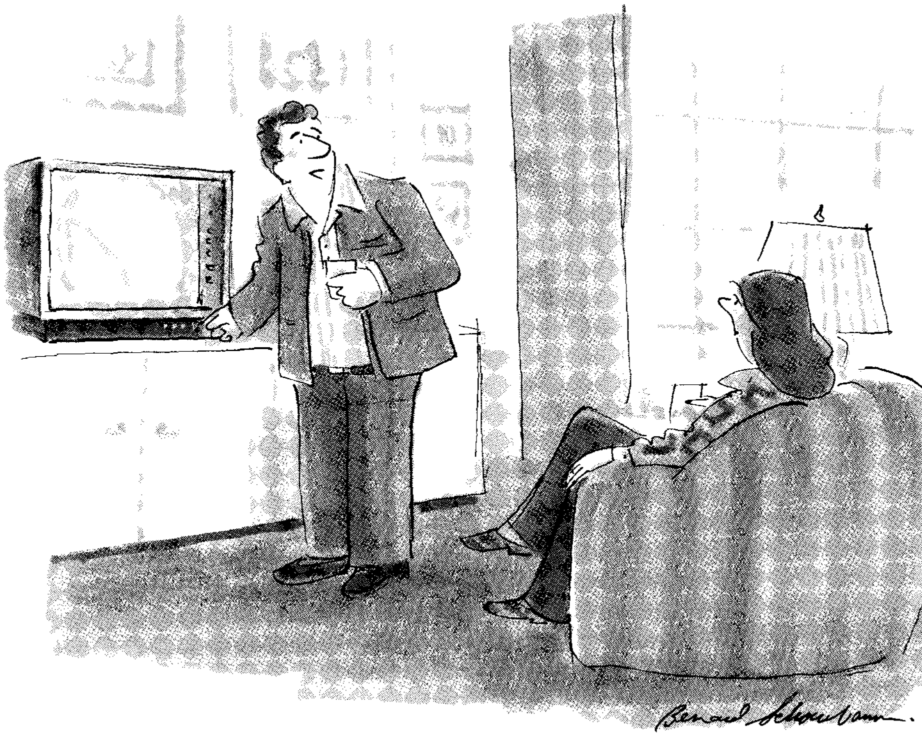
In 1965, when Ganga was twenty-four, her mother died, of Lou Gehrig's disease. "She was my best friend, and the only person who ever really dug my act, so it was really devastating, and I'd had no preparation—there was nothing to hold on to when the issue of death arose," she said. "Then, in the mid-seventies, when I was in the middle of my career as an angry feminist, I encountered Swami Muktananda, quite by accident. I went to India and stayed for two years in his ashram there, and what I got during that period was a real certainty—I mean an experience, not an idea but an *experience*—that there is a blissful place inside us which is what we are, and that it's the same for everybody, and that the apparent differences are just that, apparent differences, and really meaningless. Now, how long does that last in New York City? About ten minutes. But once you see the truth you don't really forget, and I haven't forgotten—it's just been a question of integrating what *that* was with what *this* is. I came back in 1979, and God's Love We Deliver didn't start for six years—it took that long for me to sort of simmer down."

During those years, Ganga worked as a volunteer for a hospice, and in doing so she discovered that there was no agency for feeding homebound people with AIDS. "My sense of my own role in life was to share with people what I know about the deathless nature of the human self, but you can't comfort people who have not eaten, so it seemed to me that my earnest money for God was my willingness to take on a really very time-consuming, labor-intensive, expensive mission, which was feeding whoever asked," she said. And, in fact, no one who has asked has ever been refused, and the meal provided—soup, a salad with dressing on the side, an entrée, and a freshly baked dessert—contains more than two thousand calories, enough for both lunch and dinner. "When we first started cooking, we took some flak about the expensive nature of the meals," Ganga told us. "A society editor called up and asked, 'Why are you giving your clients such good food?' I said, 'Excuse me, I'm not sure I understand—you're saying that our food is *too good* for our clients? Can I quote you?' That was a fun conversation—she went away soon. Anyway, it turns out that because our clients have no immune system they have to have the freshest food possible. Food that is slightly spoiled might give you and me a little stomach ache, but it can take them right out. Still, the most important reason for doing the best meal possible is the spiritual reason: the client is divine. So our food is the very freshest we can get. And, of course, if people are depressed, food has to be very tempting to get them to even consider eating it."

After a moment or so, Ganga went on, "People usually ask about our name. I have to tell you the truth—I heard a voice. I was brushing my teeth one morning, getting ready to meditate, and somebody said loudly in my ear—and there was nobody else in the room—'God's Love We Deliver.' I started laughing, because 'We Deliver' is on the marquee of every West Side restaurant. But it's the perfect thing—it's so nonsectarian it's impossible to misunderstand."

A few minutes later, Ganga sent us out with Joan Block, a Zen Buddhist nun who is the program director of God's Love We Deliver—it has thirty paid staff members and six hundred and fifty volunteers—to visit a client in a nearby S.R.O. Joan told us she had helped set up the neighborhood distribution centers—thirty-two of them, operating out of gay bars, churches, drug-rehabilitation centers, and the American Red Cross, among other places—and that the program gets most of its funding from foundations, corporations, and individual donations. Delivering food is a particularly good job for recovering addicts, Joan said, "because these people have been on the taking end and now they find they have something to offer, so it's quite an experience." The client she took us to see, a former I.V. drug user in his fifties, gets around with some difficulty by using a walker. The first thing he said to Joan was that he had started sponsoring a child. "Twelve dollars a month—it ain't gonna break me," he said. To us he said, "The food is really *food*. I came in here seventy pounds—now look at me," and he patted a paunch.

Back at West-Park, Ganga showed us around an office upstairs that gets put away every Friday so that the church can use the space for a Sunday school. God's Love We Deliver is outgrowing the church basement and is about to move, she told us. "I envision a huge industrial space," she said. "The city estimates that by 1993 there will be between three and four thousand people with AIDS in need of home care, so you can figure out that we're doing maybe ten per cent of the job we need to do, and that's not very cheering from my standpoint. It's better than nothing by a lot, but it's not what it has to be."


"War or peace?"

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Official Duties

A FRIEND writes:

To become a notary public in my state—Connecticut—you have to be eighteen years old, and you must live here. That's all. Well, you also have to fill out a brief application (which must, of course, be notarized) and send sixty dollars to the secretary of state. But that's *really* all. It sounded so easy that not long ago I decided to become a notary myself. I didn't have anything particular in mind. I just figured that there was so little difference between the effort involved in becoming a notary and the effort involved in not becoming a notary that I might as well go ahead.

I had another reason. For several years, I have been a faithful reader of *The National Notary* and *Notary Viewpoint*, two magazines published by the National Notary Association. These periodicals cover the notarial world with almost unbelievable care. They also cover the non-notarial world from a perspective that is exotically different from that of other publications. ("DOCUMENTS FALSIFIED BY ZACCARO IN '83 DID NOT INVOLVE NOTARIZATION," said a headline in *The National Notary* several years ago.) The N.N.A. takes notarization so seriously that after a while I began to take it seriously, too. Well, not really. But reading the N.N.A.'s magazines made me kind of want to be a notary, in the same way that reading articles about doctors or real-estate agents makes me kind of want to go to medical school or take a real-estate-licensing exam. When *Notary Viewpoint* asked its readers whether notaries should be allowed to notarize documents for members of their own families, I wanted to send in my own opinion. (No!) Besides, *The National Notary* contains advertisements for various notarial products, like embossers, ink stamps, desk signs, and wall plaques. I began to want those products for myself.

My growing desire to become a notary was not diminished by the fact that, for all the pleasure I took in reading the publications of the N.N.A., I did not understand exactly what it is that notaries are supposed to do. As a matter of fact, I still don't understand. I am not alone in this, even among notaries. According to numerous articles in my two favorite magazines, most notaries have only the vaguest notion of what their responsibilities are. Many use their embossers incorrectly, or put their stamps in the wrong places, or follow meaningless procedures of their own devising. Quite a few don't realize that it is impossible to notarize a birth certificate or a photograph. Many notaries are unaware that the term "notarization" covers a variety of distinct acts, including administering oaths, certifying the identities of document signers, and (in Florida, Maine, and South Carolina) performing marriages.

One reason for this widespread bewilderment is that most states are quite lax about screening candidates for notarial commissions. They are also lax about telling new notaries what their duties are. And very few people know the difference between a properly notarized document and an improperly notarized one, so there is little pressure on notaries to conform to the letter of the law. This would be a great scandal if notarization were important. But it's not. In an era when information, money, contracts, and everything else go zipping around the world by satellite, notarization, which dates back to the early days of the Roman Empire, is pretty much beside the point.

A few days after I received my notarial commission, I went to my local stationery store and ordered an embosser and a rubber stamp. Actually, Connecticut notaries aren't required to use either of these devices—a simple signature and commission-expiration date is plenty, in the judgment of my state's lawmakers. Still, many Connecticut notaries use embossers or stamps, or both. One reason is that many Connecticut notaries don't know that a seal is not required. Another is that acquiring the opportunity to emboss things is pretty much the most attractive aspect of becoming a notary.

About a week after my embosser arrived, I performed my first notarial act. While standing around at a cocktail party, I had overheard a friend of mine say that she had a document in her purse which needed to be notarized. I stepped forward and offered my services. I skimmed the document with professional detachment, and noticed that it did not contain "notarial language"—something *The National Notary* had instructed me to look for. I concluded that it did not need to be notarized. My friend said, "Oh, can't you just stamp it, or something?" I took her document back to my house and made several official-looking marks on it with my rubber stamp and my embosser.

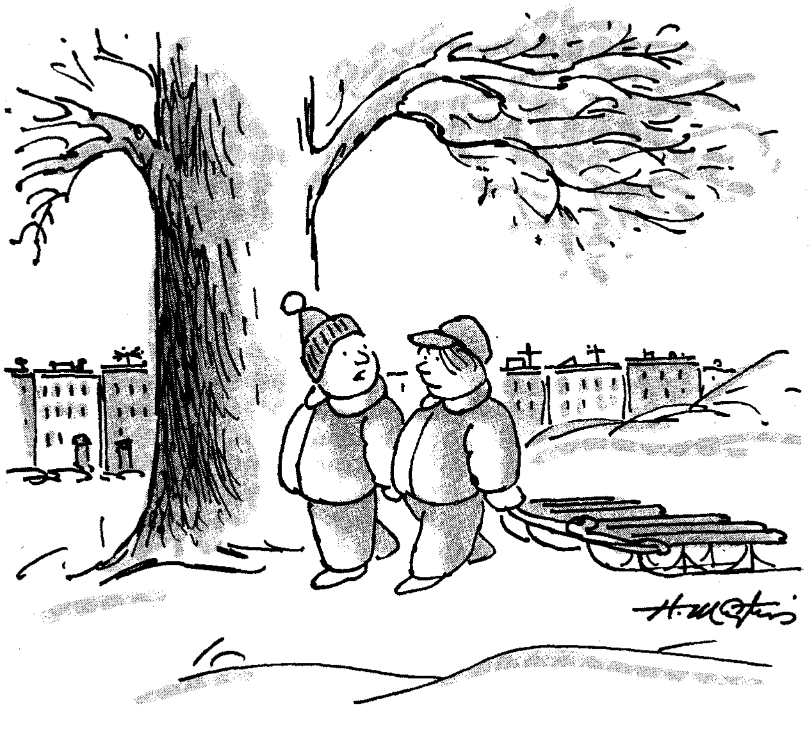
One thing I know for certain: I did not become a notary because I expected being a notary to make me rich. Connecticut law permits me to charge no more than two dollars per notarial act. Even if I construed each individual stampage or embossment as a distinct act, I would still have trouble pushing a bill up into the double digits. The same thing is true in almost all other states. New York notaries may charge no more than a quarter. Because these sums are so tiny, many notaries charge nothing at all.

Although the rewards are few, being a notary is not without its risks. If I invalidate a will by notarizing it incorrectly, the deprived heirs can sue me for the money they would have received if the will had been upheld. Other lawsuits also occur from time to time, apparently. The American Society of Notaries, which competes for members with the N.N.A., publishes a pamphlet called "How to Be a Notary Public Without Going to Jail." According to the pamphlet, a notary was once sentenced to one to three years in prison for incorrectly notarizing an application for automobile license tags.

Given all this, why do people in their right minds become notaries? It may be that *Homo sapiens* has an instinctive need to create red tape—a bureaucratic imperative. At some point in the course of human evolution, perhaps, a powerful urge to encumber official processes gave our primitive ancestors a reproductive advantage over less officious species. Today, this urge, locked deep in our genes, is still strong. There is something deeply satisfying about having official duties, even if you don't know what they are.

Takeout

HARLEY SPILLER has the right degree of acquisitiveness for someone with a bathtub in his kitchen. He has modest, carefully arranged collections of discarded keys, six-pack holsters, graffiti stickers, and Mr. T memorabilia. Over his stereo hangs an assortment of tone arms, twenty in number and lined up according to length. He has also assembled what may be the largest group of Chinese-takeout menus ever seen. Under the title "A Million Menus," his "celebration of Chinese take-out food in America" has just opened at the Franklin Furnace, the downtown performance space and artists' book archive,

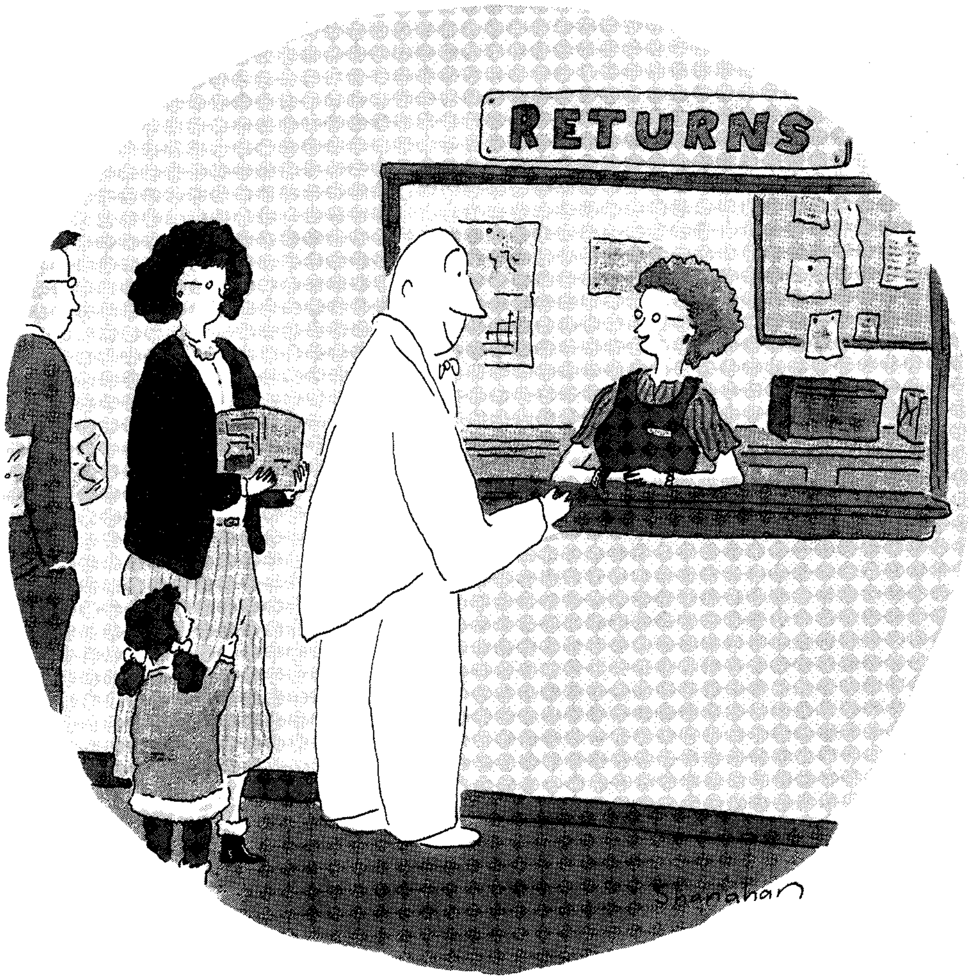


"You know who's dropped out of the news? Santa Claus."

where Spiller is the administrative director.

A couple of weeks before the opening, there were stacks of suitcases and boxes stuffed with menus—over five thousand, from all fifty states—by his refrigerator, and baskets overflowing with plastic takeout bags. "It's got out of control," he said, sidestepping around the kitchen while preparing a Sunday breakfast of tea, steamed snow-pea leaves, and Chef Chow's Mandarin Flower Rolls. "I'm still only ninety-two per cent finished with alphabetizing the menus." He added that he enjoyed this task despite the filing complications brought on by rapid turnover and sudden name changes. "I've got China Lady, and then I've got New China Lady," he said. "You want to put those together. But on Second Avenue the Miraculous Mandarin became the Sizzling Szechuan—how do you deal with that?" For one address on the East Side he had menus from a succession of eight different Chinese restaurants, and he expected some critics to accuse him of padding the show. His guideline, he said, was "If they rubber-stamp it 'Asparagus in Season,' I'm counting it as a new menu."

Mr. Spiller said that his could be the first art show in history where "a good ten per cent of the items have footprints on them." He also said that, in the face of anti-menu backlash from apartment dwellers who after a week away can come home to a foyer carpeted with triplicate copies from several local deliverers, he wanted to focus attention on the often invisible role played by the Chinese restaurant in America's daily life. "For most of these restaurants, the menus seem to be their basic means of advertising," he went on. "One owner told me that he prints a hundred thousand at a time and uses them up in two months."



"Dr. Millmoss!"

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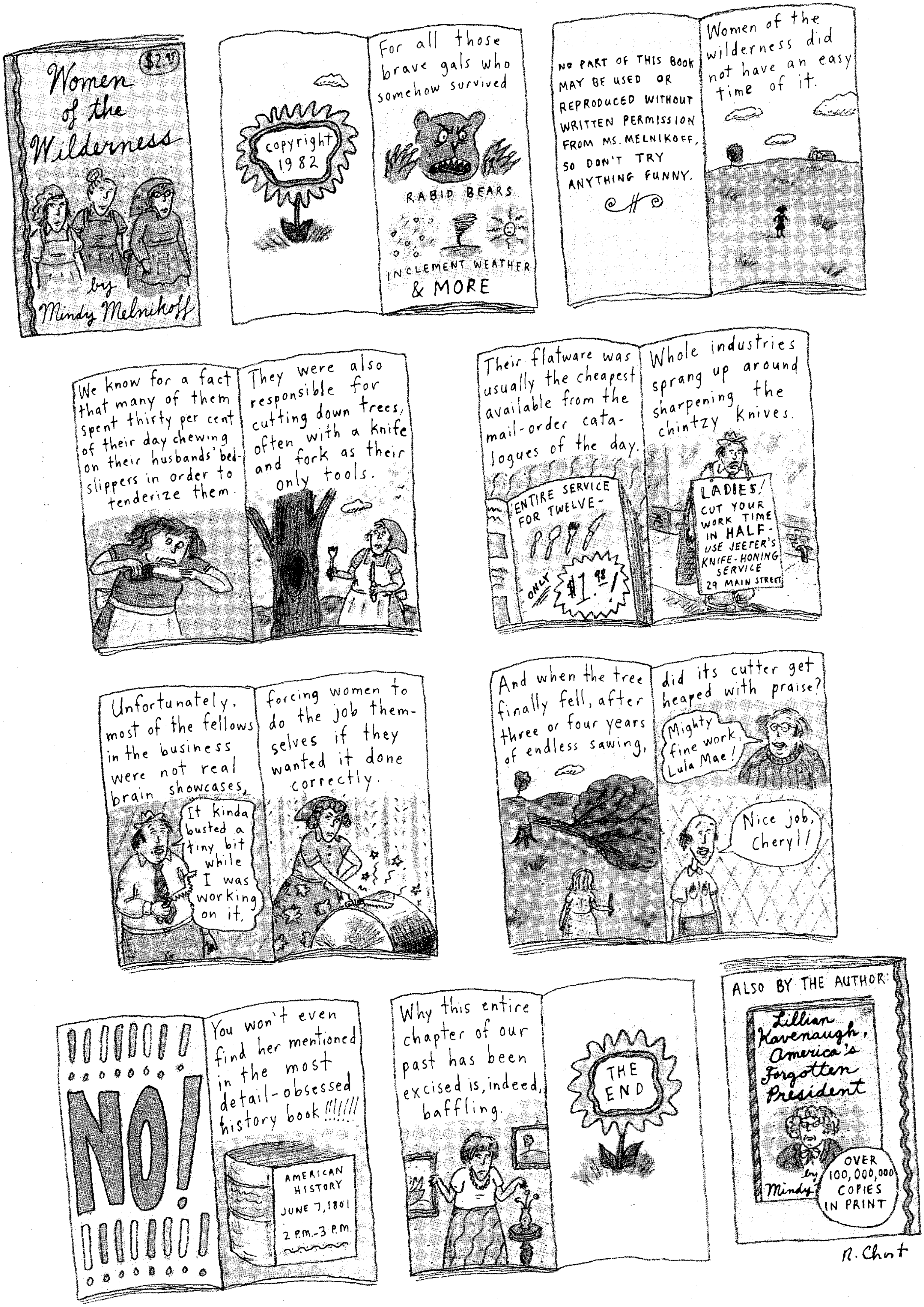
Mr. Spiller began his collection when he arrived in New York from Buffalo, nearly ten years ago. During after-dinner strolls along Upper Broadway, he would yank menus off the strings and bent coat hangers outside the takeout counters, and go home to read everything he had gathered up. "First and foremost, I liked the typos," he explained. "But also the exotica. I was meat and potatoes until I came to New York. I remember when I first ate squid. Now I eat squid like peas." One rainy Saturday, Mr. Spiller decided to alphabetize his menus. "It took seven hours," he said. "It was dinnertime and I hadn't eaten breakfast. I thought, I've got something here." He began to go out of his way to pick up uncollected samples for his set. Two years ago, he applied to the Franklin Furnace and was granted a show.

"A Million Menus" may actually shed more light on the unusual energies of Harley Spiller than on the history of Chinese food in America. He regrets, for example, that he never consulted the twenty-five thousand menus in the collection of the New York Public Library. "I think they're more interested in hardcover menus—if that's the term—anyway," he told us. He does have a menu from 1916, with fifteen different and shockingly expensive teas, including Head Cone Yam ($1) and Sun Sen Char, grown on Cloud-Covered Mountain Heights ($5). A cousin of his came up with that rarity. Mr. Spiller's sister Lora wrote to chambers of commerce all over the country, and as a result menus from Mobile, Alabama (House of Chin), Bismarck, North Dakota (Jade Garden), and Rockford, Illinois (You Won), are represented. And a friend from Staten Island donated his family's stained takeout palimpsest. "Look, they just kept ordering from the same one for years," Mr. Spiller said, showing us the dishes circled and prices updated in smudged pencil.

A video component of the show features delivery of food from a restaurant to Mr. Spiller's apartment, and in vitrines and along the walls of the gallery can be found sterling-silver chopsticks, five-gallon drums of duck sauce, takeout containers, a lamp made out of dried fish, an original painting of a street corner in Chinatown, and a menu autographed by Ed Koch. The woman who designed Pee-wee Herman's scooter built a five-foot fortune cookie for the show. "She said, 'I'll take a little brown paint and toast the edges,' " Mr. Spiller said. "It's gonna look good!"


Women of the Wilderness
$2.95
by Mindy Melnikoff
copyright 1982
For all those brave gals who somehow survived
RABID BEARS
INCLEMENT WEATHER
& MORE
NO PART OF THIS BOOK MAY BE USED OR REPRODUCED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM MS. MELNIKOFF, SO DON'T TRY ANYTHING FUNNY.
Women of the wilderness did not have an easy time of it.
We know for a fact that many of them spent thirty per cent of their day chewing on their husbands' bed-slippers in order to tenderize them.
They were also responsible for cutting down trees, often with a knife and fork as their only tools.
Their flatware was usually the cheapest available from the mail-order catalogues of the day.
ENTIRE SERVICE FOR TWELVE - ONLY $1.98!
Whole industries sprang up around the sharpening chintzy knives.
LADIES! CUT YOUR WORK TIME IN HALF - USE JEETER'S KNIFE-HONING SERVICE 29 MAIN STREET
Unfortunately, most of the fellows in the business were not real brain showcases,
It kinda busted a tiny bit while I was working on it.
forcing women to do the job themselves if they wanted it done correctly.
And when the tree finally fell, after three or four years of endless sawing,
did its cutter get heaped with praise?
Mighty fine work, Lula Mae!
Nice job, Cheryl!
NO!
You won't even find her mentioned in the most detail-obsessed history book!!!!!!
AMERICAN HISTORY JUNE 7, 1801 2 P.M.-3 P.M.
Why this entire chapter of our past has been excised is, indeed, baffling.
THE END
ALSO BY THE AUTHOR:
Lillian Kavenaugh, America's Forgotten President
by Mindy
OVER 100,000,000 COPIES IN PRINT
R. Chast

FARRELL'S CADDIE

WHEN Farrell signed up, with seven other aging members of his local Long Island club, for a week of golf at the Royal Caledonian Links, in Scotland, he didn't foresee the relationship with the caddies. Hunched little men in billed tweed caps and rubberized rain suits, they huddled in the misty gloom as the morning foursomes got organized, and reclustered after lunch, muttering as unintelligibly as sparrows, for the day's second eighteen.

Farrell would never have played thirty-six holes a day in America, let alone walked the distance, but here in Scotland golf was not an accessory to life, drawing upon one's marginal energy; it *was* life, played out of the center of one's being. At first, stepping forth on legs one of which had been broken in a college football game forty years before, and which damp weather or a night of twisted sleep still provoked to a reminiscent twinge, he missed the silky glide and swerve of the accustomed electric cart, its magic-carpet suspension above the whispering fairway; he missed the rattle of spare balls in the retaining shelf, and the round plastic holes to hold drinks, alcoholic or carbonated, and the friendly presence on the seat beside him of another gray-haired sportsman, another warty pickle blanching in the brine of time, exuding forbearance and the expectation of forbearance, and resigned, like Farrell, to a golfing mediocrity that would gradually make its way down the sloping dogleg of decrepitude to the level green of death.

Here, however, on the heather-rimmed fairways, cut as close as putting surfaces back home, yet with no trace of mower tracks, and cheerfully marred by the scratchings and burrows of the nocturnal rabbits that lived and bred beneath the impenetrably thorny, waist-high gorse, energy came up through the turf, as if Farrell's cleats were making contact with primal spirits beneath the soil, and he felt he could walk forever. The rolling and treeless terrain, the proximity of the wind-whipped sea, the rain that came and went with the suddenness of thought composed the ancient matrix of the game, and the darkly muttering caddies were also part of this matrix.

That first morning, in the drizzly shuffle around the golf bags, his bag was hoisted up by a hunched shadow who, as they walked together in pursuit of Farrell's first drive (good contact, but pulled to the left, toward some shaggy mounds), muttered half to himself, with those hiccups or glottal stops the Scots accent inserts, "Sandy's wha' they call me."

Farrell hesitated, then confessed, "Gus." His given name, Augustus, had always embarrassed him, but its shortened version seemed a little short on dignity, and at the office, as he had ascended in rank, his colleagues had settled on his initials, "A.D."

"Here, ye want tae geh oover the second boosh fra' th' laift," Sandy said, handing Farrell a 7-iron. The green was out of sight behind the shaggy mounds, which were covered with long tan grass that whitened in waves as gusts flattened it.

"What's the distance?" Farrell was accustomed to yardage markers—yellow stakes, or sprinkler heads.

The caddie looked reflectively at a sand bunker not far off, and then at the winking red signal light on the train tracks beyond, and finally at a large bird, a gull or a crow, winging against the wind beneath the low, tattered, blue-black clouds. "Ah hunnert thirty-eight tae the edge of the green, near a hunnert fifty tae the pin, where they ha' 't."

"I can't hit a 7-iron a hundred fifty. I can't hit it even one forty, against this wind."

Yet the caddie's fist, in a fingerless wool glove, did not withdraw the offered club. "Seven's what ye need."

As Farrell bent his face to the ball, the wet wind cut across his eyes and made him cry. His tears turned the ball into two; he supposed the brighter one was real. He concentrated on taking the club head away slowly and low, initiating his downswing with a twitch of the left hip, and suppressing his tendency to dip the right shoulder. The shot seemed sweet, soaring with a gentle draw up precisely over the second bush. He looked toward the caddie, expecting congratulations or at least some small sign of shared pleasure. But the man, his creased face weathered the strangely even brown of a white actor playing Othello, followed the flight of the ball as he had that of the crow, reflectively. "Yer right hand's a wee bit froward," he observed, and the ball—they saw as they climbed to the green—was indeed pulled to the left, in a deep pot bunker. Furthermore, it was fifteen yards short. The caddie had underclubbed him, but showed no sign of remorse as he handed Farrell the sand wedge. In Sandy's dyed-looking face, pallid gray eyes showed like touches of morning light; it shocked Farrell to realize that the other man, weathered though he was, and bent beneath the weight of a perpetual golf bag, was younger than himself—a prematurely wizened Celt, or Pict, serving one of Northeast America's tall, bloated Anglo-Saxons.

The side of the bunker toward the hole was as tall as Farrell and sheer, built up of bricks of sod in a way never seen at Long Island courses. Rattled, irritated at having been unrepentantly underclubbed, Farrell swung five times into the damp, brown sand, darker than any sand on Long Island. With each swing, the ball thudded beneath the trap's high lip and dribbled back at his feet. "Hit at it well beheend," the caddie advised, "and dinna stop the cloob." Farrell's sixth swing brought the ball bobbling up onto the green, within six feet of the hole.

His fellow Americans lavished ironical praise on the shot, but the caddie, with deadpan solemnity, handed him his putter. "Ae ball tae th' laift," he advised, and Farrell was so interested in this peculiar phrase—the ball as a unit of measure—that his putt stopped short. "Ye forgot tae hit it, Gus," Sandy told him. Farrell tersely nodded. Tingling with nervousness, he felt onstage and obliged to keep up a show of the stoic virtues. Asked for his score, he said loudly, in a theatrical voice, "That was an honest ten."

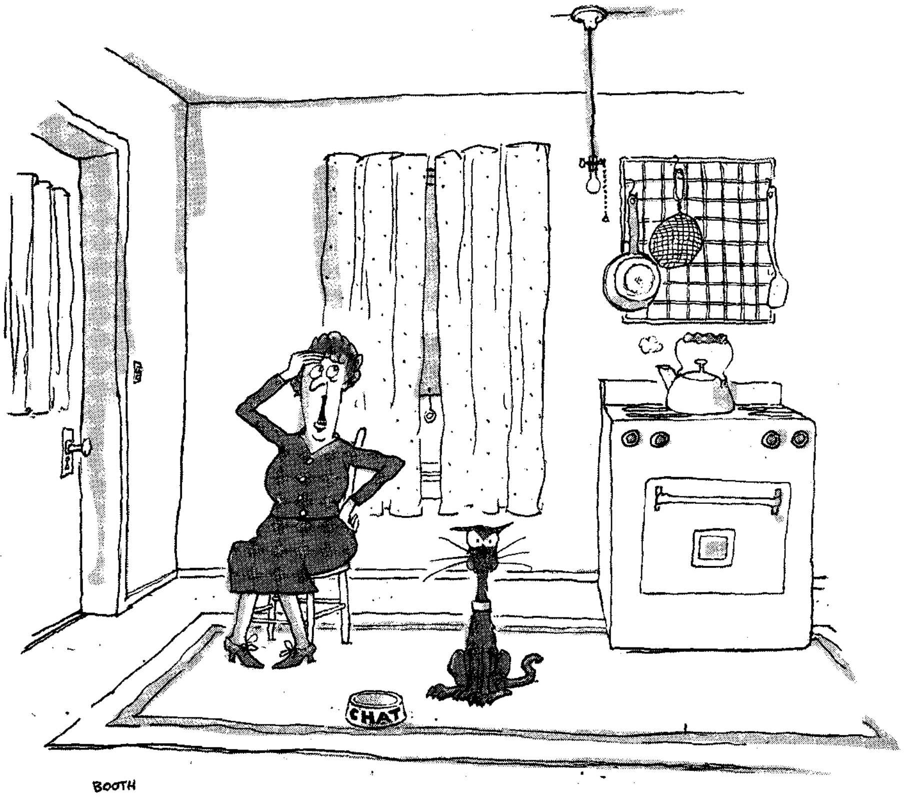
"We'll call it a six," said the player keeping score, in the forgiving American way.

As the round progressed, through a rapid alternation of brisk showers and silvery sunshine, with rainbows springing up around them and tiny white daisies gleaming underfoot, Farrell and his caddie began to grow into each other, as a foot in damp weather grows into a shoe. Sandy consistently handed Farrell a club too short to make the green, but Farrell came to accept the failure as his; his caddie was handing the club to the stronger golfer latent in Farrell, and it was Farrell's job to let this superior performer out, to release him from his stiff, soft, more than middle-aged body. On the twelfth hole, called "Dunrobin"—a seemingly endless par 5 with a broad stretch of fairway, bleak and vaguely restless like the surface of the moon, receding over a distant edge marked by two small pot bunkers and a pale-green arm of gorse that extended from the rabbit-undermined thickets on the left—his drive clicked. Something about the ghostly emptiness of this particular hole's terrain, the featurelessness of it, removed Farrell's physical inhibitions; he felt the steel shaft of the driver bend in an elastic curve at his back, and a corresponding springiness awaken in his knees, and knew, as his weight smoothly moved from the right foot to the left, that he would bring the club face squarely into the ball, and indeed did, so that the ball—the last of his new Titleists, the others having disappeared in gorse and heather and cliffside scree—was melting into the drizzle straight ahead almost before he looked up, his head held sideways, as if pillowed on his right ear, just like the heads of the pros on television. "O.K.?" he asked Sandy, mock-modest but also genuinely fearful of some hazard, some trick of the layout, that he had missed taking into account.

"Bonnie shot, sir," the caddie said, and his face, as if touched by a magic wand, crumpled into a smile full of crooked gray teeth, his constantly relit cigarette adhering to one corner. Small matter that Farrell, striving for a repetition of this scarcely precedented distance, topped the following 3-wood, hit a 5-iron fat, and skulled his wedge shot clear across the elevated green. He had for a second awakened the golf giant sleeping among his muscles, and imagined himself vindicated in the other man's not quite colorless, not quite indifferent eyes.

DINNER, for this week of excursion, was a repeating male event, the same eight Long Island males, their hair growing curly and their faces ruddy away from the dry Manhattan canyons and air-conditioned compartments where they had accumulated their little fortunes. They discussed their caddies as men, extremely unbuttoned, might discuss their mistresses. "Come on, Freddie, hit it fer once!" the very distinguished banker Frederic R. Panoply boasted his had cried out to him in frustration as, on the third day of his cautious, down-the-middle banker's game, he painstakingly addressed his ball.

Another man's caddie, when asked what he thought of Mrs. Thatcher, had responded with a twinkle, "She'd be a good hump."



"Is it starve a fever and feed a cat? Or feed a fever and starve a cat?"

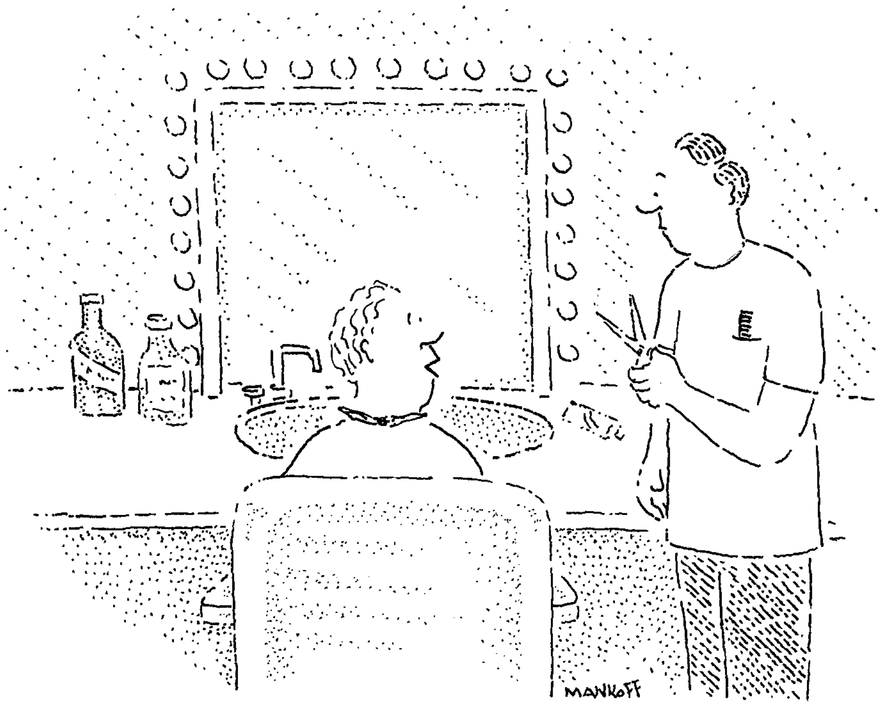
Farrell, prim and reserved by nature, had relatively little to offer of his caddie. He worried about the man's incessant smoking, and whether at the end of a round he tipped him too much less than what a Japanese golfer would have given. As the week went by, their relationship had become more intuitive. "A 6-iron?" Farrell would now say, and without a word would be handed the club. Once, he had dared decline an offered 6, asked for the 5, and sailed his unusually well-struck shot into the sedge beyond the green. On the greens, where he at first had been bothered by the caddie's explicit directives, so that he forgot to stroke the ball firmly, he had come to depend upon Sandy's advice, and would expertly tilt his ear close to the caddie's mouth and try to envision the curve of the ball into the center of the hole from "an inch an' a fingernail tae th' laift." Farrell began to sink putts. He began to get pars, as the whitecaps flashed on one side of the links and on the other the wine-red electric commuter trains swiftly glided up to Glasgow and back. This was happiness, on this wasteland between the tracks and the beach, and freedom, of a wild and windy sort. On the morning of his last day, having sliced his first drive into the edge of the rough, between a thistle and what appeared to be a child's weathered tombstone, Farrell bent his ear close to the caddie's mouth for advice, and heard, "Ye'd be better leavin' 'er."

"Beg pardon?" Farrell said, as he had all week, when the glottal, hiccupping accent had become opaque. Today the acoustics were especially bad; a near-gale off the sea was making his rain pants rattle like machine guns, and deformed his eyeballs with air pressure as he tried to squint down. When he could stop seeing double, his lie looked fair—semi-embedded.

"Yer missus," Sandy clarified, passing over the 8-iron. "Ere it's tae late, mon. She was never yer type. Tae proper."

"Shouldn't this be a wedge?" Farrell asked uncertainly.

"Nay, it's sittin' up guid enough," the caddie said, pressing his foot into the heather behind the ball, so it rose up like ooze out of mud. "Ye kin reach with th' 8," he said. "Go fer yer par. Yer fauts er a' in yer mind; ye tend t' play defensive."



"Something sleek and recessionproof, Edward."

Farrell would have dismissed his previous remarks as a verbal mirage amid the clicks and skips of windblown Scots had they not seemed so uncannily true. "Too proper" was exactly what his college friends had said of Sylvia, but he had imagined that her physical beauty had been the real thing, and her propriety a pose she would outgrow, whereas thirty-five married years had revealed the propriety as enduring and the beauty as transient. As to leaving her, this thought would never have entered his head until recently; the mergers-and-acquisitions branch had recently taken on a certain Irma Finegold, with heavy-lidded eyes, full lips painted sharply red, and a curious presumptuous way of teasing Farrell in the eddies of chitchat before and after a conference. She had recently been divorced, and when she talked to Farrell she tapped her lower lip with a pencil eraser and shimmied her shoulders beneath their pads. On nights when the office worked late—he liked occasionally to demonstrate that, far along though he was, he could still pull an all-nighter with the young bucks—there had been between him and Irma shared Chinese meals from greasy take-out cartons, and a shared limo home in the dawn light. On one undreamed-of occasion, there had even been an invitation, which he did not refuse, to interrupt his return to Long Island with an hour at her apartment in Brooklyn.

The 8-iron pinched the ball clean, and the Atlantic gale brought the soaring shot left-to-right toward the pin. "Laift edge, but dinna gi' the hole away," Sandy advised of the putt, and Farrell sank it, for the first birdie of his week of golf.

Now, suddenly, out of the silvery torn sky, sleet and sunshine descended simultaneously, and as the two men walked at the same tilt to the next tee, Sandy's voice came out of the wind, "An' steer clear o' the MiniCorp deal. They've leveraged th' company tae death."

Farrell studied Sandy's face. Rain and sleet bounced off the brown skin as if from a waxy preservative coating. Metallic gleams showed as the man surveyed, through narrowed eyelids, the watery horizon. Farrell pretended he hadn't heard. On the tee he was handed a 3-wood, with the advice, "Ye want tae stay short o' th' wee burn. The wind's come aroond behind, bringin' the sun with it."

As the round wore on, the sun did struggle through, and a thick rainbow planted itself over the profile of the drab town beyond the tracks, with its soot-black steeples and distillery chimneys. By the time of the afternoon's eighteen, there was actually blue sky, and oblique solar rays. Pockets of lengthening shadows showed the old course to be everywhere curvacious, crest and swale, like the body of a woman. Forty feet off the green on the fourteenth ("Whinny Brae"), Farrell docilely accepted the caddie's offer of a putter, and rolled it up and over the close-mowed irregularities to within a gimme of the hole. His old self would have skulled or fluffed a chip. "Great advice," he said, and in his flush of triumph challenged the caddie: "But Irma *loves* the MiniCorp deal."

"Aye, 't keeps the twa o' you togither. She's fairful ye'll wander off, i' th' halls o' corporate power."

"But whatever does she see in me?"

"Lookin' fer a faither, the case may be. Thet first husband o' hers was meikle immature. And also far from yer own income bracket."

Farrell felt his heart sink at the deflating shrewdness of the analysis. His mind elsewhere, absented by bittersweet sorrow, he hit one pure shot after another. Looking to the caddie for praise, however, he met the same impassive, dour, young-old visage, opaque beneath the billed tweed cap. Tomorrow, the man would caddie for someone else, and Farrell would be belted into a business-class seat within a 747. On the home stretch of holes—one after the other strung out along the tracks, as the Victorian brick clubhouse, with its turrets and neo-Gothic arches, drew closer and closer—Farrell begged for advice. "The 5-wood, or the 3-iron? The three keeps it down out of the wind, but I feel more confident with the wood, the way you've got me swinging."

"The five'll be ower and gone, ye're a' pumped up. Take the 4-iron. Smooth it on, laddie. Aim fer th' little broch."

"Broch?"

"Wee stone fortress, frae th' days we had our own braw king." He added, "An' ye might be thinkin', Gus, aboot takin' early retirement. The severance deals won't be so sweet aye. Ye kin free yerself up, an' take on some consults, fer th' spare change."

"Just what I was thinking, if Irma's a will-o'-the-wisp."

"Will-o'-the-wisp, do ye say? Ye're a speedy lairner."

Farrell felt flattered and wind-scoured, here in this surging universe of green and gray. "You think so, Sandy?"

"I ken sae. Ye can tell a' aboot a man, frae th' way he gowfs."

—JOHN UPDIKE

THREE POEMS

SOMETIMES MR. COGITO RECEIVES STRANGE LETTERS

Mrs. Amelia from Darmstadt
asks for help
in finding her great-great-grandfather
Ludwig I

he was lost
like so many others
in the tumult of the war

he was seen
for the last time
on a family estate
in the region of Jelenia Góra

Mr. Cogito
remembers well
the severe winter of 1944
full of fires

the great-great-grandfather
Grossherzog by profession
lived at the time
inside a frame

he stood
before a garden house
in a uniform
white trousers

on the right
a broken column
in the background
a dark stormy sky
with a bright stripe on the horizon

Mr. Cogito
thinks
without a trace of irony
about the death of the great-great-
grandfather

didn't he lose
his cold blood
when the conflagration
was sitting astride the parapet

didn't he cry out
as he was dragged across the courtyard

didn't he fall
pleading on his knees
when they aimed
at the great star on his chest

the imagination
of Mr. Cogito
is small
like a stretcher-bearer
lost in fog

he does not see
the face
the uniform
white trousers

he sees only
the dark stormy sky
with a bright stripe on the horizon

MR. COGITO THINKS OF RETURNING TO THE CITY WHERE HE WAS BORN

If I went back there
probably I wouldn't find
even a shadow from my house
or the trees of childhood
or the cross with an iron plate
the bench where I whispered incantations
chestnuts and blood
or a single thing that is ours

all that was saved
is a flagstone
with a circle drawn in chalk
I stand in the center
on one leg
the moment before jumping

I cannot grow up
although years go by
and planets and wars
roar above

I stand in the center
motionless as a statue
on a single leg
before the leap to finality

the circle of chalk turns red
like old blood
while all around
piles of ash are growing
up to my shoulders
up to my mouth

THE ABYSS OF MR. COGITO

At home it is always safe

but just beyond the door
as soon as Mr. Cogito
leaves for a walk in the morning
he encounters—an abyss

it is not the abyss of Pascal
it is not the abyss of Dostoyevski
it is an abyss
to Mr. Cogito's measure

its particular features
are not bottomlessness
or the terror it causes

it follows him like a shadow
stops at the bakery
in the park it reads the newspaper
over Mr. Cogito's shoulder

as bothersome as eczema
attached to him like a dog
too shallow to engulf
head arms and legs

one day perhaps
the abyss will grow up
the abyss will mature
and become serious

if only he knew
what water it drinks
what grain to feed it

now
Mr. Cogito
could gather
a few handfuls of sand
fill it up
but he does not do this

when
he returns home
he leaves the abyss
outside the door
covering it carefully
with a small piece of old cloth

—Zbigniew Herbert

(*Translated, from the Polish, by John and Bogdana Carpenter.*)

OLD FLAME

“GRACE died.”

As Zoë replaces the lid of the electric kettle—having steamed the envelope open—her eye is caught by that stark statement. As she unfolds the plain white writing paper, another random remark registers before she begins to read from the beginning: “We never quarrelled not once that I remember.”

The spidery scrawl, that economy with punctuation, were once drooled over by her husband, and to this day are not received in any ordinary manner, as a newspaper bill is, or a rates demand. Because of the sexual passion once there, the scrawl connects with Charles’ own neat script—two parts of a conjunction in which letters have played an emotional role. Being given to promptness in such matters, Charles will at once compose a reply, considerate of an old flame’s due. Zoë feared this correspondence once, and hated it. “As ever my love, Audrey”: in all the years of the relationship the final words have been the same.

As always, she’ll have to reseal the envelope, because the adhesive on the flap has lost its efficacy. Much easier all that is nowadays, with convenient sticks of Pritt or Uhu. Once, at the height of the affair, she’d got glue all over the letter itself.

Zoë, now seventy-one, is a small, slender woman, only a little bent. Her straight hair, once jet black, is almost white. What she herself thinks of as a letter-box mouth caused her, earlier in her life, to be designated attractive rather than beautiful. “Wild,” she was called as a girl, and “unpredictable,” both terms relating to her temperament. No one has ever called her pretty, and no one would call her wild or unpredictable now.

Because it’s early in the day, she is still in her dressing gown—a pattern of dragons in blue-and-scarlet silk. It hugs her slight body, crossed over on itself in front, tied with a matching sash. When her husband appears he, too, will still be in his dressing gown—comfortably woollen, Teddy-bear brown stitched with braid. “Dearest, dearest Charles,” the letter begins. Zoë reads all of it again.

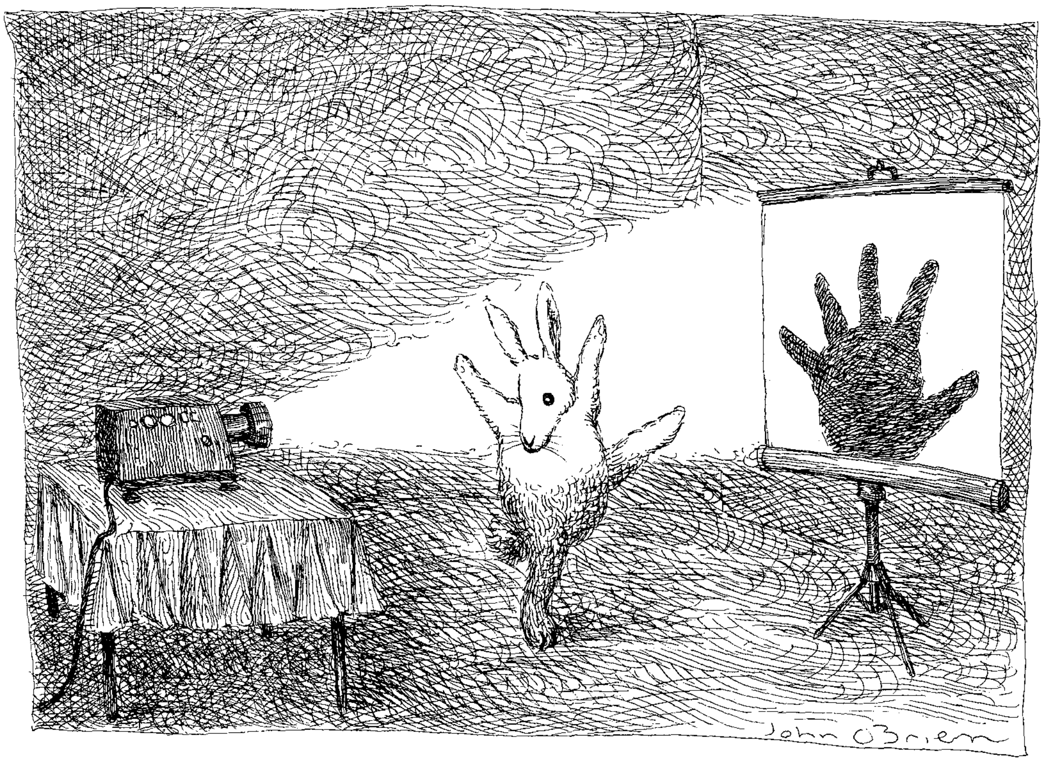
This letter is special, of course, because of Grace’s death. Others have been different. “Grace and I wondered how you are getting along these days. . . . ” “Grace and I have finally taken retirement. . . .” “I’m to give you this address Grace says. Just in case you ever want to write. . . .” “A seaside house. Grace always wanted that. . . .” In 1985, in 1978 and ’73 and ’69, Grace always had a kind of say. “A quick lunch sometime?” each letter—this one, too—suggests before the “As ever my love” and the single cross that’s a reminder of their kissing. Somehow, Zoë has always believed, the quick-lunch suggestion came from Grace. Did she, Zoë wonders, make it again on her deathbed?

The affair has developed an extra sense in Zoë. Without making an effort, she can visualize a tall woman she has never met, now the lone occupant of a house she has never entered. She sees her smartly dressed in shades of maroon, her iron-gray hair fashionably arranged, the clarity of her eyes a little clouded. Creases have multiplied on the skin of her face and have become a map of wrinkles now. Zoë imagines her entering her kitchen and turning on the radio, to hear the same news she herself heard earlier: football fans on the rampage in a German city, shopwindows smashed, a bus turned on its side. She imagines her standing with a cup of Nescafé in the bow window of her sitting room: seen through drizzle on a pane, the sea is a pattern of undulations, grayish green, scuffed with white. The sky that meets it on the far horizon is too dull to contemplate. A single mackerel trawler slips into view.

“If it’s inconvenient or if you’d rather not well of course I understand. . . .”

The Alp Horn is where they lunch, have done so since 1951. Her inquisitiveness getting the better of her, Zoë went there once. She actually went inside, giving a name she had made up, of someone she was to meet there. A musical instrument, presumably an alphorn, stretched the length of a wall; Tyrolean landscapes decorated two others. There were checked tablecloths, blue and red; recorded music played; the place was modest. “I’m awfully sorry,” Zoë said to a waiter—half a lifetime ago, it seems like, because in fact it is. “Clearly there’s been a muddle.”

She finds the Pritt where Charles keeps it—in the middle drawer of the dresser, with his writing things and sealing wax, Sellotape, and scissors. She boils the water in the kettle again, for coffee. She hears his footstep above her, crossing the landing from their



bedroom to the lavatory, crossing it again to the bathroom. Pipes rattle when he turns on the hot water, because he has never learned not to turn the tap all the way in order to prevent its gushing so. All the years she has known him he has been impatient about things like that.

"It's time you saw Charles again," Zoë knows Grace used to say in that house, and guesses Audrey's reply: that Charles has his own life now, that Charles made his choice. Grace always pressed, gently, because she loved Charles, too, but had to keep it to herself. "My dear, I'm certain Charles would welcome a sign." Anything could have happened; they'd never know.

Forty years have passed since the year of the great passion: 1951. Charles and Audrey and Grace had met in that colorless time of disaffected lives and utility clothes, when nobody was having much fun except the remaining spivs. Audrey and Grace had been in the A.T.S. during the war, together all the time. When Charles arrived on the scene they were back in office life, both of them determined to use their secretarial posts as stepping stones to something better. The day Charles appeared—the first time they laid eyes on him—he was being led around by the snooty, half-drunk Miss Maybury, both of them with glasses of *vin rosé*, which was what La Maybury—her office title—drank every afternoon, sometimes in the mornings also. "Hullo," Charles said, a lanky young man with floppy fair hair. It wasn't difficult for Zoë to imagine the shy smile he'd darted at Audrey and then at Grace. Afterward, he'd told her about La Maybury and the wine and the tour round the office.

"Poor Charles" he would have become in after years. Poor Charles alone with his unloved, unloving wife. What was the point of any of it, now that his children were grown up? In their seaside house Audrey and Grace would have lived in hope—that one day he would sound less whispery on the telephone, passing on details of death by misadventure or disease. "Given six months, a merciful release." Or: "Just slipped. A wretched plastic bag. In the rain, near the dustbins."

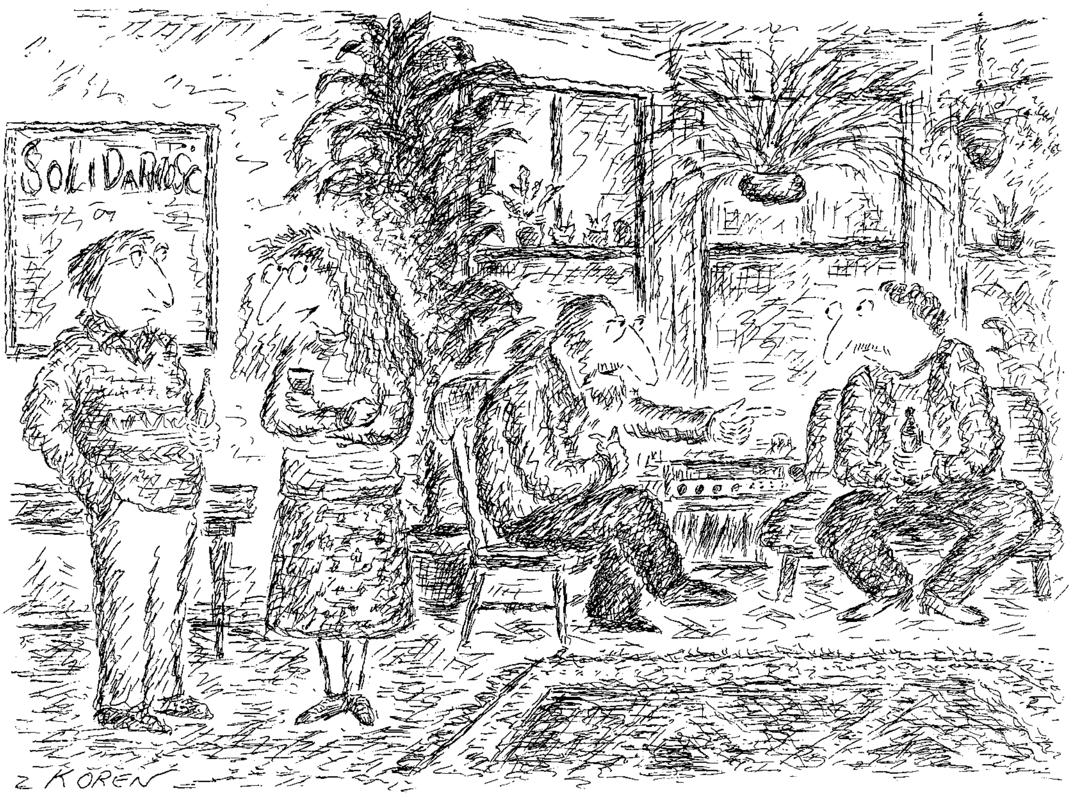
Zoë places two slices of bread in the toaster but does not press the lever down, because it isn't time to yet. Before the affair got going it had been a subject of fascination to him that two such apparently close friends should, in appearance at least, be so vastly different. "Oh, that's often so," Zoë said, citing examples from her school days, but he had never shown much interest in her school days and he didn't then. "Grace, the lumpy one's called," he said. "Back of a bus. Audrey's the stunner." Old-fashioned names, she had thought, and imagined old-fashioned girls, frumpish in spite of Audrey's looks. Later, he'd always included Grace in his references to Audrey, clouding the surface because of the depths beneath.

Zoë measures coffee into a blue Denby pot, the last piece of a set. There was a photograph she found once: Audrey as handsome as he'd claimed, a goddesslike creature with a cigarette. Grace blurred, as if she'd moved. They were sprawled on a rug beside a tablecloth from which a picnic had been eaten. You could see part of the back wheel of a car, and it wasn't difficult to sharpen into focus Grace's frizzy hair, two pink-rimmed eyes behind her spectacles. Where on earth had that picnic been? What opportunity had been seized—a slack afternoon in the office?

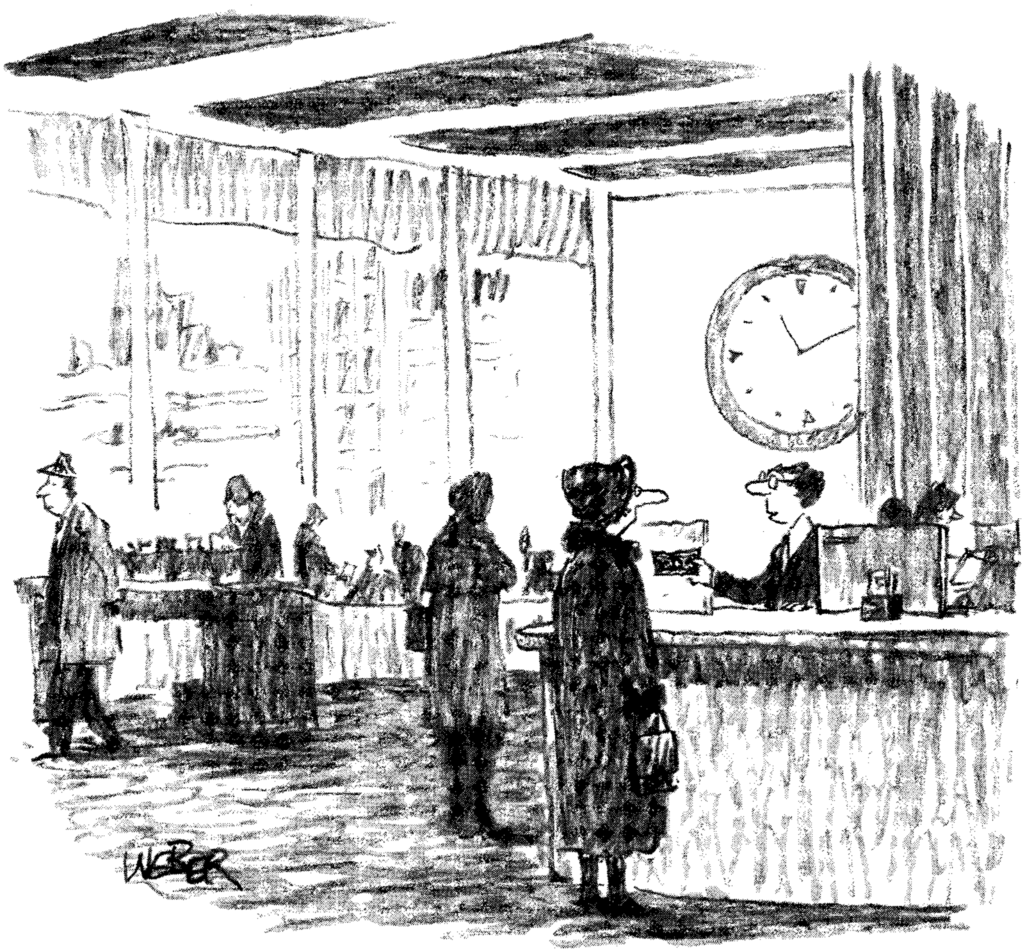
Zoë props the letter against his cup, doing so with deliberation. It will vex him that she has arranged it so, the gesture attaching a comment of her own; but then she has been vexed herself. She tore that photograph into little pieces and watched them burn. He never mentioned its loss, as naturally he wouldn't.

"Ah, good," she greets him, and watches while he picks up the letter. She depresses the lever of the toaster. The milk saucepan rattles on the gas, a glass disk bouncing about in it to prevent the milk from boiling over. She pours their coffee. He returns the letter to its envelope. She halves each piece of toast diagonally, the way he likes it.

She hadn't guessed. It was a frightening, numbing shock when he said, "Look, I have to tell you. Audrey and I have fallen in love." Just for a moment she couldn't think who Audrey was. "Audrey and I," he repeated, thinking she hadn't properly heard. "Audrey and I love one another." For what remained of that year and for several years following it, Zoë felt physically sick



"I think Jules is reminding Nat that each and every one of us produces four pounds of garbage each day, every day."



"Here's ten dollars off the books, Mrs. Gregory. It's our way of reëstablishing customer confidence."

every time that statement echoed, coming back to her from its own Sunday morning: September 9, 1951, eleven o'clock. He had chosen the time because they'd have all day to go into things, yet apart from practicalities there was nothing to go into. You couldn't much go into the fact that he wanted someone else more than he wanted her. After five years of marriage he was tired of her. He had spoken in order to be rid of her.

Finishing with the marmalade, she moves it closer to him. His face, less expert at disguise than once it was, hides nothing. She watches him thinking about the woman who has been left on her own, his sympathy reaching into a seaside house that's now too spacious for one. But Charles is not an imaginative man. He doesn't penetrate far. He doesn't see in the old flame's fridge a chicken joint for one, and fish for one tomorrow. Winter's a melancholy time to be bereaved, a mood reflected in the cold and wet, winds rattling and whining. Audrey'll miss her friend particularly when it comes to watching television, no one beside her to share a comment with.

"Oh, yes, the Alp Horn's still there," Zoë hears, a little later that morning, having eased open a door he has carefully closed. "Twelve-forty-five, should we say? If your train's a little late, anything like that, please don't worry. I'll simply wait, my dear."

Before that, he'd been saying something she hadn't managed to hear, his voice unnaturally low, a hand cupped round the mouthpiece. Then there'd been the hint of a reprimand because the old flame hadn't written sooner. Had he known he'd have gone to the funeral.

"I'm sorry to have hurt you so," he said later that Sunday, but words, by then, made no sense whatsoever. Five years of a mistake, she thought, two children mistakenly born. Her tears dripped onto her clothes while he stood there crestfallen, his good looks distorted by distress. She did not blow her nose; she wanted to look as she felt. "You would like me dead," she sobbed, willing him to raise his fist in fury at her, to crash it down on her, obliterating in mercy all that remained of her. But he only stood there, seeming suddenly ill-fed. Had she not cooked properly for him? her thoughts half-crazily ran on. Had she not given him what was nourishing? "I thought we were happy," she whispered. "I thought we didn't need to question anything."

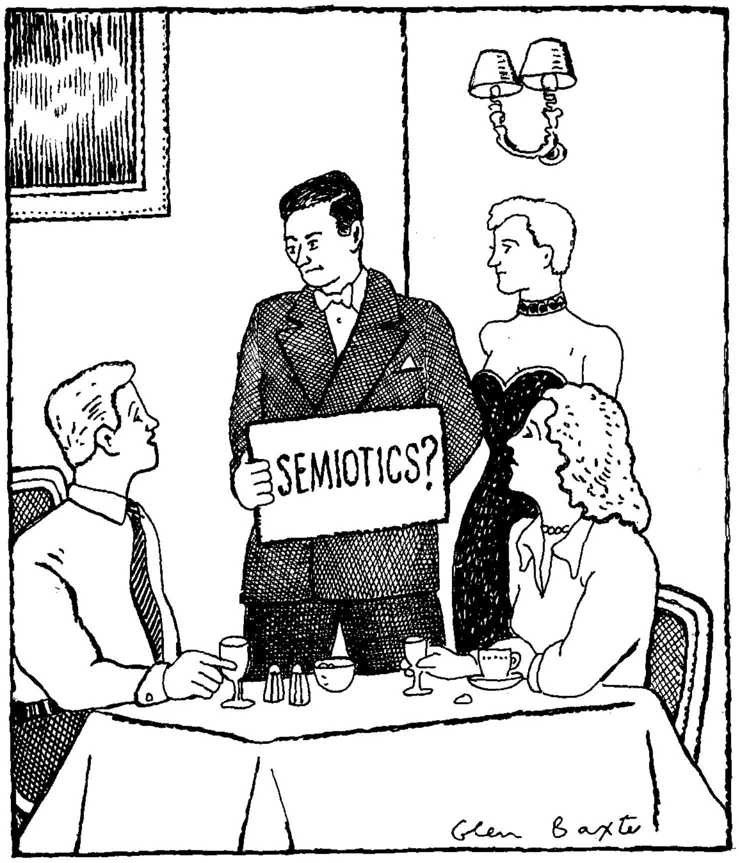
"Nice to see the old Alp Horn again," his murmur comes from the hall, and Zoë can tell that he's endeavoring to be cheerful. "Tell you what, I'll bring a packet of Three Castles."

There is the click of the receiver, the brief sounding of the bell. He says something to himself, something like "Poor thing!" Zoë softly closes the door. Grace and Audrey had probably been friends for fifty years, might even have been school friends. Was Audrey the one whom other girls had pashes on? Was Grace a little bullied? Zoë imagines her hunched sulkily into a desk, and Audrey standing up for her. In letters and telephone conversations there have been references to friends, to holidays in Normandy and Brittany, to bridge, to Grace's colonic irrigation, to Audrey's wisdom teeth being removed in hospital. Zoë knows—she doesn't often call it guessing—that after Audrey's return from every visit to the Alp Horn, Grace was greedy for the morsels passed on to her. Not by the blink of an eye could Grace reveal her secret; the only expression of her passion was her constancy in urging another letter. "We think of you with her in that coldness. . . . " "Quite frail he looked," Audrey no doubt reported in recent years.

He did not stay with Zoë in 1951 because of love. He stayed because—quite suddenly and unexpectedly—the emotions all around him seemed to have become too much: it was weariness that caused him to back off. Had he sensed, Zoë wondered years later, the shadow of Grace without entirely knowing that that was what it was? He stayed, he said, because Zoë and the children—the two who had then been born—meant more than he had estimated. Beneath this statement there was the implication that it wasn't fair to impose hardship on the innocent for the sake of his own happiness. That, though unspoken, had a bitter ring for Zoë. "Oh, go away!" she cried. "Go to that unpleasant woman." But she did not insist; she did not say that there was nothing left, that the damage had been done forever. To the woman, he quoted his economic circumstances as the reason for thinking again. Supporting two households—which in those days was what the prospect looked like—was more than daunting. "Grace says you wouldn't have to leave them penniless. What she and I earn could easily make up for that, Grace would love to help us out. . . ." Had he gone, Grace would somehow have been there, too.

Zoë knows when the day arrives. Glancing across their breakfast coffee at her, his eyes have a dull sparkle that's caused by an attempt to rekindle an obsolete excitement: he was always one to make an effort. In a letter once Audrey referred to his "loose-limbed charm," stating that she doubted she could live without it and be herself. He still has that lanky look, which perhaps was what she meant. What remains of his floppy fair hair, mainly at the back and sides of his head, is ash-colored now; his hands—which Zoë can well imagine either Grace or Audrey designating his most elegant feature—have a shrivelled look, the bones more pronounced than once they were, and splotches of freckles on skin like old paper. His face is beakier than it was, the teeth for the most part false, his eyes given to watering when a room is warm. Two spots of pink come and go, high up on his narrow cheeks, where the structure of the cheekbones tautens the skin. Otherwise, his face is pale.

"I have to go in today," he casually announces.



IT LOOKED LIKE BEING ANOTHER TERRIBLY LONG EVENING.

"Not here for lunch?"

"I'll pick up a sandwich somewhere."

She would like to be able to suggest he'd be wiser to go to a more expensive restaurant than the Alp Horn. Cheap food and house wine are a deadly combination at his time of life. A dreadful nuisance it is when his stomach goes wrong.

"Bit of shopping to do," he says.

Once there was old So-and-So to meet, but that doesn't work anymore, because, with age, such figures can't be counted upon not to give the game away. There was "the man at Lloyds" to see, or Hanson and Phillips, who were arranging an annuity. All that has been tapped too often; what's left now is the feebleness of shopping. Before his retirement there was no need to mention anything at all.

"Shopping," she says, without an interrogative note. "Shopping."

"One or two things."

Three Castles cigarettes are difficult to find. Audrey will smoke nothing else, and it's half a joke that he goes in search of them, a fragment of affection in the kaleidoscope of the love affair. Another such fragment is their shared delight in sweetbreads, a food Zoë finds repellent. They share unpunctuality also. "Grace can't understand how we ever manage to meet!"

"Should keep fine," he predicts.

"Take your umbrella all the same."

"Yes, I'll take my umbrella."

He asks about a particular shirt, his blue-striped one. He wonders if it has been ironed. She tells him where it is. Their three children—the boys, and Cecilia, born later, all married now—know nothing about Audrey. Sometimes it seems odd to Zoë that this should be so, that a person who has featured so profoundly in their father's life should be unknown to them. If that person had had her way Cecilia would not have been born at all.

"Anything you need?" he offers. "Anything I can get you?"

She shakes her head. She wishes she could say, "I open her letters. I listen when there's a phone conversation." She wishes he could tell her that Grace has died, that her friend is now alone.

"Back about four, I expect?"

"Something like that."

Had he gone off, she wouldn't still be in this house. She wouldn't be sitting in this kitchen in her scarlet-dragon dressing gown, eying him in his woolly brown one. She'd be living with one of the children or in a flat somewhere. Years ago the house would have been sold; she'd not have grown old with a companion. It was most unlikely there would ever have been another man; she doubted she'd have wanted one.

"I dreamed we were on a ferry going to Denmark," he unexpectedly says. "There was a woman you got talking to, all in brown."

"Prettily in brown?"

"Oh, yes. A pretty woman, too. She used an odd expression. She said she was determined to have what she called 'a corking child.' "

"Ah."

"You sat me down in front of her and made me comment on her dress. You made me make suggestions."

"And did you, Charles?"

"I did. I suggested shades of green. Deep greens—not olive like my trousers. And rounded collar ends on her shirt, not pointed like mine. I made her look at mine. She was a nice woman except that she said something a little rude about my shoes."

"Scuffed?"

"Something like that."

"Your shoes are never scuffed."

"No."

"Well, there you are."

He nods. "Yes, there you are."

Soon after that he rises and goes upstairs again. Why did that conversation about a dream take place? It's true that just occasionally they tell one another their dreams; not just occasionally—they have always done so. But significance appears to attach to the fact that he shared his with her this morning; that is a feeling she has.

"Why did you bother with me if I didn't matter?" Long after he'd decided to stay with her she asked him that. Long afterward she questioned everything; she tore at the love that had united them in the first place. It was her right that he should listen to her. Five years went by before their daughter was born.

"Well, I'm off."

Like a tall, thin child he looks, his eyes deep in their sockets, his dark, conventional suit well pressed, a paisley tie, in swirls of blue, that matches the striped blue shirt. His brown shoes, the pair he keeps for special occasions, gleam as they did not in his eccentric dream.

"If I'd known I'd have come with you." Zoë can't help saying that; she doesn't intend to, the words come out. But they don't alarm him, as once they would have. Once, a shadow of terror would have passed through his features, apprehension spreading lest she rush upstairs to put her coat on.

"We'll go in together next time," he promises.

"Yes, that'll be nice."

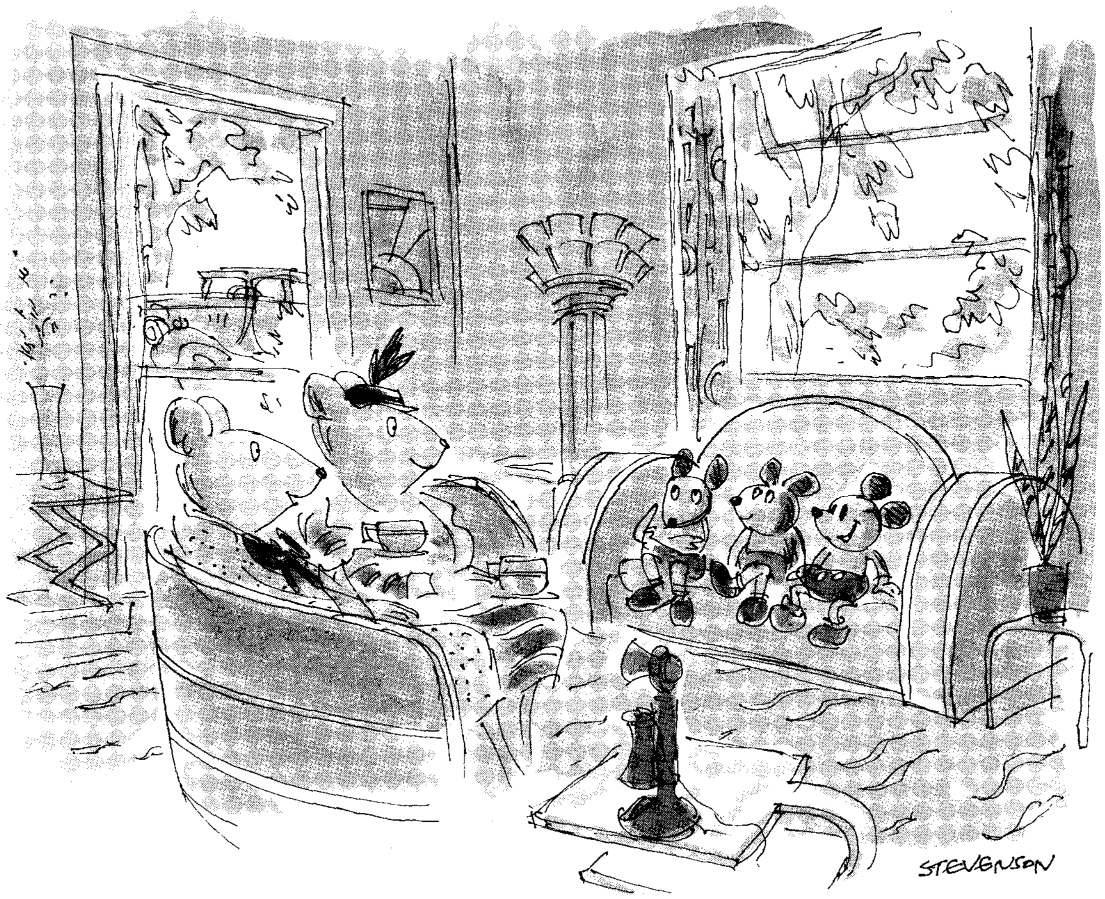
They kiss, as they always do when they part. The hall door bangs behind him. She'll open a tin of salmon for lunch and have it with tomatoes and a packet of crisps. A whole tin will be too much, of course, but between them they'll probably be able for whatever's left this evening.

In the sitting room she turns the television on. Celeste Holm, lavishly fur-coated, is in a car, cross about something. Zoë doesn't want to watch and turns it off again. She imagines the old flame excited as the train approaches London. An hour ago the old flame made her face up, but now she does it all over again—difficult with the movement of the train. Audrey doesn't know that love came back into the marriage, that skin grew over the wound. She doesn't know, because no one told her, because he cannot bring himself to say that the brief occasion was an aberration. He honors—because he's made like that—whatever it is the affair still means to the woman whose life it has disrupted. He doesn't know that Audrey—in receipt of all that was on offer—would have recovered from the drama in a natural way if Grace—in receipt of nothing at all—hadn't been an influence. He doesn't wonder what will happen now, since death has altered the pattern of loose ends.

Opening the salmon tin, Zoë travels again to the Alp Horn rendezvous. She wonders if it has changed and considers it unlikely. The long horn still stretches over a single wall. The same Tyrolean landscape decorates two others. There are the blue-and-red tablecloths. He waits with a glass of sherry, and then she's there.

"My dear!"

She is the first to issue their familiar greeting, catching him unawares, the



"Larry and Phil aren't sure what they want to do, but Michael is interested in show business."

• •

way things sometimes do these days.

“My dear!” he says in turn.

Sherry is ordered for her, too, and when it comes the rims of their glasses touch for a moment, a toast to the past.

“Grace,” he says. “I’m sorry.”

“Yes.”

“Is it awful?”

“I manage.”

The waiter briskly notes their order and inquires about the wine.

“Oh, the good old house red.”

Zoë’s fingers, gripping and slicing a tomato, are arthritic, painful sometimes, though not at present. In bed at night he’s gentle when he reaches out for one hand or the other, cautious with affection, not tightening his grasp as once he did. Her fingers are ugly; she sometimes thinks she looks quite like a monkey now. She arranges the fish and the tomato on a plate and sprinkles pepper over both. Neither she nor Charles ever has salt.

“And you, Charles?”

“I’m all right.”

“I worry about you sometimes.”

“No, I’m all right.”

It was accordion music that was playing in the Alp Horn the day Zoë’s inquisitiveness drove her into it. Young office people occupied the tables. Business was quite brisk.

“I do appreciate this,” Audrey says. “When something’s over, all these years . . . I do appreciate it, Charles.”

He passes the packet of Three Castles cigarettes across the table, and she smiles, placing it beside her because it’s too soon yet to open it.

“You’re fun, Charles.”

“I think La Maybury married, you know. I think someone told me that.”

“Grace could never stand her.”

“No.”

Is this the end? Zoë wonders. Is this the final fling, the final call on his integrity and honor? Can his guilt slip back into whatever recesses there are, safe at last from Grace’s secondhand desire? No one told him that keeping faith could be as cruel as confessing faithlessness; only Grace might have appropriately done that, falsely playing a best friend’s role. But it wasn’t in Grace’s interest to do so.

“Perhaps I’ll sell the house.”

“I rather think you should.”

“Grace did suggest it once.”

Leaving them to it, Zoë eats her salmon and tomato. She watches the end of the television film. Years ago they saw it together, before 1951, long before Grace and Audrey. They’ve seen it together since; as a boy he’d been in love with Bette Davis. Picking at the food she has prepared, Zoë is again amused by what has amused her before. But only part of her attention is absorbed. Conversations take place; she does not hear: what she sees are fingers undistorted by arthritis loosening the cellophane on the cigarette packet and twisting it into a butterfly. He orders coffee. The scent that came back on his clothes was lemony with a trace of lilac. In a letter there was a mention of the cellophane twisted into a butterfly.

“Well, there we are,” he says. “It’s been lovely to see you, Audrey.”

“Lovely for me, too.”

When he has paid the bill they sit for just a moment longer. Then, in the ladies’, she powders away the shine that heat and wine have induced, and tidies her tidy gray hair. The lemony scent refreshes, for a moment, the stale air of the cloakroom.

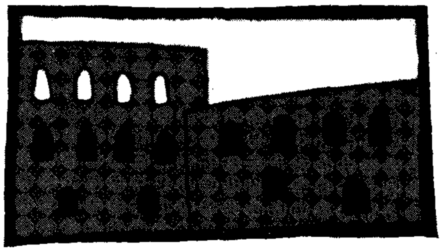
“Well, there we are, my dear,” he says again on the street. Has there ever, Zoë wonders, been snappishness between them? Is she the kind not to lose her temper, long-suffering and patient as well as being a favorite girl at school? After all, she never quarrelled with her friend.

“Yes, there we are, Charles.” She takes his arm. “All this means the world to me, you know.”

They walk to the corner, looking for a taxi. Marriage is full of quarrels, Zoë reflects.

“BEING upright never helps. You just lie there. Drink lots of water, Charles.”

The jug of water, filled before she’d slipped in beside him last night, is on his bedside table, one glass poured out. Once, though quite a while ago now, he not only insisted on getting up when he had a stomach upset but actually worked in the garden. All day, she’d watched him filling his incinerator with leaves and weeding the rockery. Several times she’d rapped on the kitchen window, but he’d taken no notice. As a result he was laid up for a fortnight.



“I’m sorry to be a nuisance,” he says.

She smooths the bedclothes on her side of the bed, giving the bed up to him, making it pleasant for him in the hope that he’ll remain in it. The newspaper is there for him when he feels like it. So is “Little Dorrit,” which he always reads when he’s unwell.

“Perhaps consommé later on,” she says. “And a cream cracker.”

“You’re very good to me.”

“Oh, now.”

Downstairs Zoë lights the gas fire in the sitting room and looks to see if there’s a morning film. “Barefoot in the Park” it is, about to begin. Quite suddenly then, without warning, she sees how the loose ends are. Everything is different, but nothing, of course, will ever be said. “So good the little restaurant’s still there,” the old flame writes. “Just a line to thank you.” So good it was to talk. So good to see him. So good of him to remember the Three Castles. Yet none of it is any good at all, because Grace is not there to say, “Now tell me every single thing.” Not there to say when there’s a nagging doubt, “My dear, what perfect nonsense!” On her own in the seaside house she’ll not find an excuse again to suggest a quick lunch if he’d like to. He’ll not do so himself, since he never has. He’ll gladly feel his duty done at last.

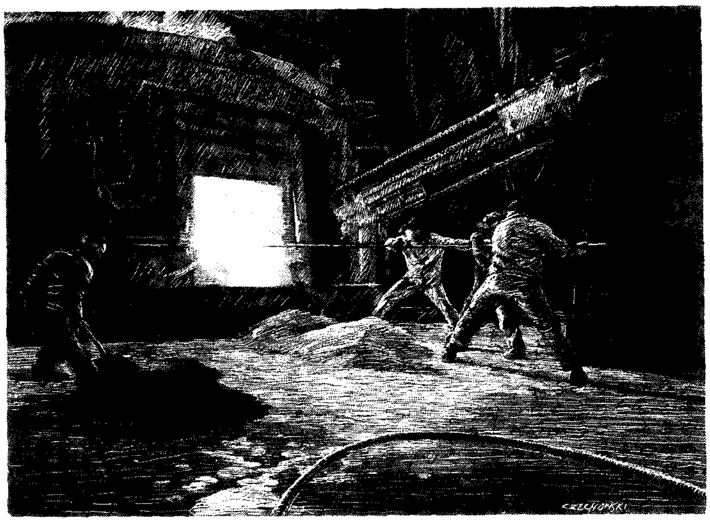
The old flame bores him now, with her scent and her cigarettes and her cellophane butterflies. In her seaside house she knows her thank-you letter is the last, and the sea is gray, and again it rains. One day, on her own, she’ll guess her friend was false. One day she’ll guess a sense of honor kept pretense alive.

Grace died. That’s all that happened, Zoë tells herself, so why should she forgive? “Why should I?” she murmurs. “Why should I?” Yet for a moment, before she turns on “Barefoot in the Park,” tears sting her eyelids. A trick of old age, she tells herself, and orders them away.

—WILLIAM TREVOR

ANNALS OF ENTERPRISE

HOT METAL—I



THE corporate headquarters of the Nucor Corporation, the tenth-largest steel company in the United States, occupies a suite of rented offices in the Cotswold Building, a four-story cube of buff bricks next to a shopping center in Charlotte, North Carolina. Nucor is said to have the smallest corporate headquarters of any Fortune 500 company. Nucor does business out of a fourth-floor suite the size of a group dental practice. At the time I first visited the headquarters, in March of 1988, Nucor owned twenty-two manufacturing plants, flung all over the United States. The plants made steel and steel products. There were a total of seventeen employees at Nucor's headquarters, including secretaries and the chairman and chief executive officer, F. Kenneth Iverson. That is, Nucor had a grand total of 0.8 corporate staff members per factory.

As I sat waiting in the reception office, I flipped through a sales catalogue that described the wonders of Nucor bolts. Nucor's bolts are made from melted Cadillacs, among other lumps of recycled steel. I didn't care to buy a million bolts, so I turned to the company's annual report, where I read that Nucor enjoyed eight hundred and fifty million dollars in annual revenues from the sale of steel and steel products, and had earned fifty million dollars in net profit the previous year—a good year for Nucor. The company's stock was trading on the New York Stock Exchange at around forty dollars a share. Nucor's main product was bar steel—slender lengths of plain carbon steel. Plain carbon steel is iron mixed with a little bit of carbon, which makes the metal hard and springy. Four of Nucor's twenty-two manufacturing plants were electric steel minimills—miniature steel mills that make bar steel from junk melted by electricity—and those plants both sold steel on the open market and provided simple raw-steel products to Nucor's steel-fabrication plants, which made structural-steel products like joists and girders. There was a simple Nucor bolt plant, manned by ex-farmers and robots. Nucor produced over two million tons of steel a year, made exclusively from trash, and Nucor's sales force sold the metal for around seventeen cents a pound, with a net profit of one or two cents a pound, or twenty to forty dollars a ton—a good margin, for steel. Americans consume the equivalent of five Great Pyramids of solid steel every year—a hundred and five million tons, worth forty billion dollars—and about forty per cent of it is recycled steel. Toyotas, tin cans, skyscrapers, bolts, supertankers—eventually, they wind up back in a furnace in a steel mill.

I could hear Iverson talking on the telephone. "Hello. Ken Iverson here . . . Spell it? I-v-e-r-s-o-n. Nucor . . . Nuke Ore!" It ended with the clatter of a telephone, and Iverson appeared. He was sixty-two years old, and he had a tall, limber, rangy frame and luminous pale-gray eyes. A modest gut bulged his shirt. He led me down a hall and settled himself behind his desk, in a corner office that faced west over the shopping center but had no view, because venetian blinds were drawn. I sat down in a chair. It was covered with textured plastic meant to look like suède; it felt like a scrub pad.

"There's nobody at this company who's covering their ass with paper," Iverson said. "We have people come in here who think we're the real big shots in the company. It gets me irritated. We don't do much here at Charlotte. That's not a joke. Except the cash. We handle the cash." He grinned, exposing a chipped upper front tooth. He spoke in a breezy, sociable voice. "The Big Steel companies in the United States are scared. They don't *say* so, but they are scared." By "Big Steel," he meant the likes of the USX Corporation and the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. "We're going to get into the market for flat-rolled sheet steel. That's the largest single market for steel in this country."

There was a photograph of a black swan on the wall. "That's Jessica," Iverson said. "I raise waterfowl. Swans are mean, most of 'em. Black swans have a better disposition than white swans. Jessica's my favorite." On a bookshelf was a steel hubcap marked with the word "Reo." "That came from a Reo truck," he explained. Nucor is the successor to the Reo Motor Car Company, which was founded in 1904 by the acronymous Ransom Eli Olds, who also invented the Oldsmobile. In the nineteen-fifties, Reo had become a company called the Nuclear Corporation of America, and that had mutated into Nucor, and by the nineteen-seventies Nucor was melting Oldsmobiles in such numbers that they might have been snowflakes hitting warm pavement. The Reo hubcap on Iverson's shelf was the only hard asset of Reo left at Nucor.

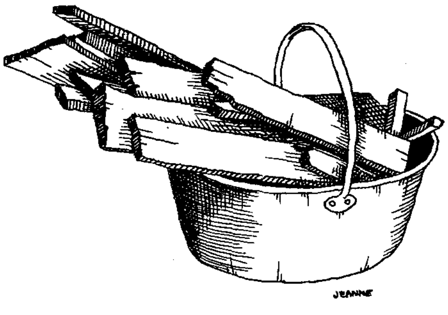
In 1969, Nucor had burst into the steel business unannounced and uninvited, and Iverson, the architect of the company's arrival in the business of making plain carbon steel, had since become something of a cult figure in the international steel industry. Iverson was in certain respects the most carefully watched steelmaker in the world. Steelmakers from Japan, Korea, India, Brazil, Turkey asked each other at steel conferences, "What is Mr. Iverson doing now?" Executives in the American steel industry often asked themselves a similar question—"What in hell is Iverson doing now?" Iverson had ripped almost a billion dollars' worth of steel markets away from Big Steel. All of Nucor's plants were non-union plants; Iverson was not a popular man with the United Steelworkers. He had built his steel mills and steel-product factories in small rural towns, among farm people, who are comfortable with machinery and hate labor unions. Some Nucor steelworkers continued to farm a little corn and slop a few hogs. On occasion, they offered to recycle a union organizer into a bar of steel.

Iverson reached up to a bookshelf, pulled down a blueprint, and laid it on his desk. The blueprint showed the outlines of a new steel mill on a square mile of cornfields south of the town of Crawfordsville, Indiana—a blank piece of farmland upon which Iverson intended to restore American steel to its former greatness. The Crawfordsville Project would be the first major steel mill for making flat-rolled steel to be built on open land in this country in nearly twenty years. Nucor proposed to install at the heart of the mill a gigantic experimental machine for making sheet steel. The machine would be fabricated in West Germany, would be shipped in pieces by freighter to the United States, and would consist of around a million parts. No one knew if it would work, because a thing like Iverson's machine had never been built before. Iverson moved his finger over the blueprint, tracing the shapes of three buildings, each the size of a skyscraper lying on its side. "The Crawfordsville Project is immensely complicated but immensely simple," he said. "We are constructing one million square feet of building space. This is going to be a unique process for manufacturing sheet steel. We're going to cast a very thin slab of steel, two inches thick and fifty-two inches wide, and then we're going to roll it down into a sheet, in one continuous process."

Iverson's machine, the heart of the steel mill, was to be the world's first *continuous*-steelmaking machine for making sheet steel. It was known as the compact-strip-production facility, the C.S.P. machine, and it was a commercially unproved German invention. Iverson's machine was eleven hundred and seventy-seven feet long, the length of approximately four football fields. Two connected buildings would house it. The product of the C.S.P. machine would be hot-rolled sheet steel, which is also called hot-band steel, because the metal is rolled flat, into a long ribbon, while it glows the color of a tangerine. The third building was a cold mill. The cold mill would contain machines that would cold-roll some of the metal that came out of the C.S.P., elongating the hot-band steel, making it nearly as thin as paper, and putting a shine on it: cold-rolled steel.

"The Rust Belt is the reason we placed the machine in Indiana," Iverson said. "Indiana is in the center of the Rust Belt, and the Rust Belt has a huge excess of scrap." Iverson's official projection was for the machine to make eight hundred and twenty thousand tons of steel a year from busted junk. He hoped it would make a million tons a year. Twenty-five thousand railroad cars a year would deliver the Rust Belt to the Crawfordsville Project. The railroad cars would carry shredded automobiles, factory punchings, tin cans, sheared skyscrapers, cut-up steel mills, that sort of thing. The Rust Belt would be cooked in twin electric furnaces. Then the resulting molten steel would be drained out of a furnace, carried in a ladle up to the head of the compact-strip-production machine, and poured into the machine, and a thousand feet down the line out would come an endless succession of three-thousand-foot strips of rich, glistening steel. The steel would be coiled up with a rumble, like a roll of paper towels, and from there it would be moved up a conveyor ramp and out into the Midwest.

Steel is the monster of heavy industry; steelmaking machines are the fiercest, largest, and heaviest manufacturing engines on the planet; and there is money to be made in steel. Iverson's machine would be as long as a battleship. If it worked, it would be a starship for American steel. If it worked, it might turn Nucor into one of the largest steel companies in the United States. It might turn the wreckage of America's industrial decline into a ribbon of brand-new steel. "We are going to leapfrog Japan," Iverson said.



The machine would run on three levels of software, and, as the software was perfected, the machine would transform itself over time into something of a robot. "In the steel industry, you get a development like this once every fifty years," Iverson said.

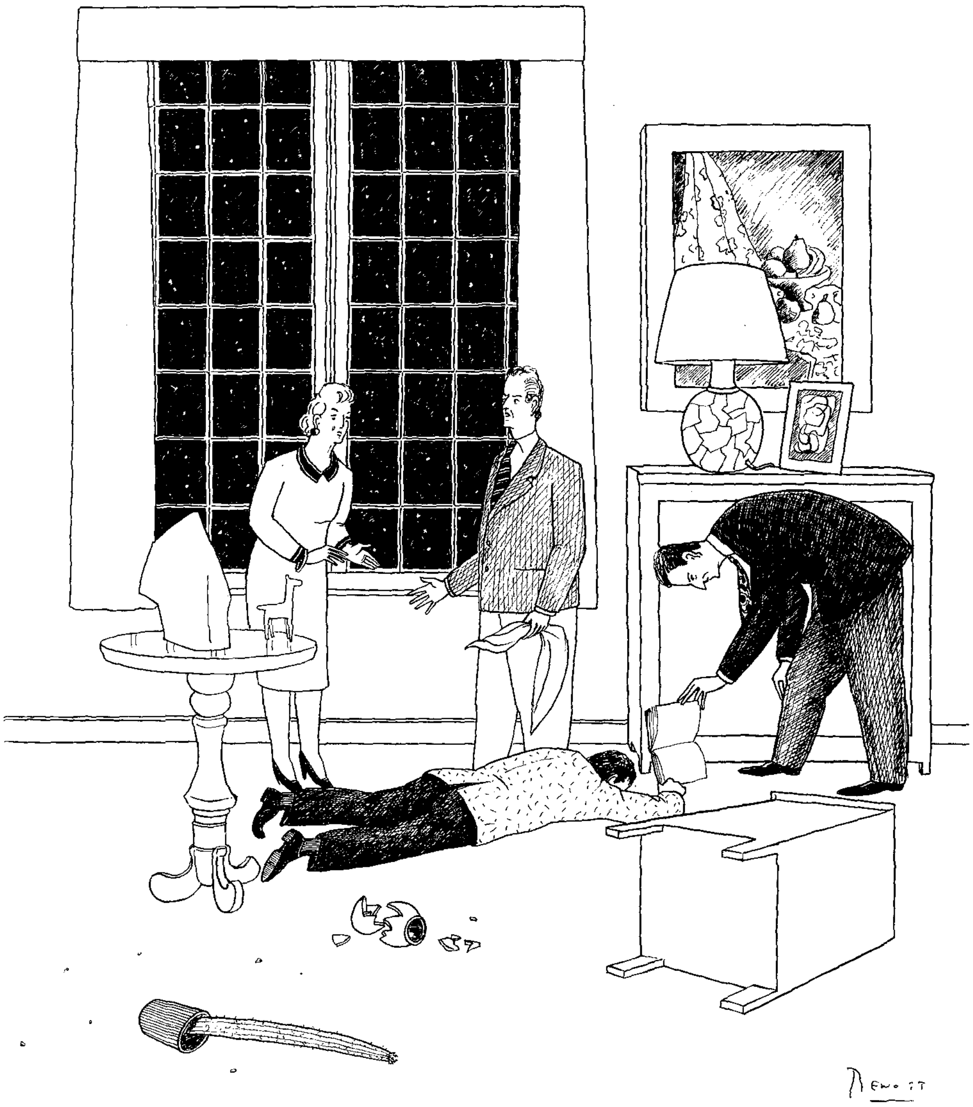
Although Iverson's machine was as long as a battleship, it was a gadget in comparison with a major steel mill. A major steel mill sprawls over anything from two to seven miles, usually along a body of water. The making of steel by the traditional method takes place in steps, in a process that was developed in the nineteenth century. Coke and iron go into a blast furnace, and out comes liquid iron, and the liquid iron is transformed into liquid carbon steel in another furnace. Then the liquid carbon steel is poured into pots, to solidify into ingots, or, in a comparatively recent innovation, it's poured into a continuous-casting machine, which ejects a series of thick forty-foot-long solid slabs of steel. The slabs, or ingots, are rolled through hot-rolling machines and then through cold-rolling machines. The end result is sheet steel. The method requires machines that cost billions of dollars, it burns huge amounts of energy, and it depends on the mass labor of thousands of steelworkers. That is to say, the manufacture of steel is capital-intensive, energy-intensive, and labor-intensive. The Nucor Corporation intended to do for the steel mill what Apple had done for the computer. Iverson's machine was a desk-top steel mill.

The machine was supposed to manufacture the hoped-for million tons of steel a year with only four hundred steelworkers. In Japan, making a million tons a year requires at least two thousand steelworkers, so Iverson figured that the machine was going to be five times more labor-efficient than the Japanese steel industry, which is regarded as one of the most advanced steel industries in the world. In Japan, it takes four or five man-hours of labor to make a ton of hot-rolled steel. "We're hoping to get to *one* man-hour per ton of steel at Crawfordsville, and that's including everybody, even the guy who sweeps the floor," Iverson said. "I don't *care* about the cost of labor in Korea or Brazil. The Brazilians could pay their people a dollar an hour, and it wouldn't make any difference to us."

I asked him if he was scared.

"Scared? What—scared it won't work? I'm comfortable with it." He knocked a cigarette out of a pack, lit it, and inhaled. His gray eyes looked at me through smoke. "I'm *enthusiastic* about it. In Crawfordsville, where almost everything is new, I have young guys. Young people can accept challenges. Young people can accept new ideas, whereas older people are trying to protect their hard-won gains. We expect our people in Indiana to make mistakes, because whoever you put in a system like that is going to make mistakes." Headhunters were busy worming through the guts of the largest American steel companies, hiring young manufacturing specialists away from Big Steel for the Crawfordsville Project.

Iverson wanted to build the steel mill in eighteen months—breakneck speed. He would rely on fast-track construction, in which a plant is designed while it is being built. He had originally budgeted two hundred and twenty-five million dollars for the Crawfordsville Project, but, not surprisingly, the budget had grown larger, and it had recently hit a quarter of a billion dollars. Much of this was borrowed money—commercial paper, short-term debt. He had handed a quarter of a billion dollars to a bunch of young people and had told them to go build a steel mill that would blow the hair off the world steel industry.



"He read for two straight hours without any training."

"I've got an interesting report, right here, by Bethlehem Steel," Iverson said. "They're watching us. It's Bethlehem's opinion of our program at Crawfordsville. It's Bethlehem's evaluation of why it won't work." He stood up and fished a manila folder from a bookshelf. It hit his desk with a smack. "The report is *an inch thick*," he said, in a tone of wonder. "This is an internal memorandum. Somebody gave it to us. They've got cost models in here. They say here that we couldn't possibly build one of these plants for less than four hundred million dollars. And even if we did build it, they say, we wouldn't have any competitive advantage." His grin widened until it was huge, exposing his chipped tooth, pushing his ears away from his head.

KEN IVERSON was a mechanical engineer and a metallurgist by training. He described himself as a hot-metal man. In the mind of a hot-metal man, steel in its natural state is a river, continually changing its shape and yet always the same thing. "Hot metal has a fascination all its own," Iverson explained. "There is a fascination about melting a metal and pouring it into a shape."

Iverson tries to visit each of Nucor's plants and steel mills at least once a year, and he walks the full length of each plant's manufacturing line with the plant's general manager. Typically, if he's in a steel minimill, he walks the line with a hard hat on his head and with a pair of steelworker's dark glasses clipped to the brim of his hard hat, and wears a green sparkproof jacket, a furnaceman's jacket. He wears a hearing aid in his left ear, because he has gone a little deaf from hanging around too many monstrous machines. He enjoys the carnival in a detached kind of way, bathed in the hoots of sirens and the concussions of the outstreaming tons—*ba-boom, ba-boom, ba-boom*, the sound of glowing strips of bar steel nosing through a rolling machine at thirty miles an hour. The metal running through the rolling machine isn't hot; it's only red-hot, at a temperature of 2000 degrees Fahrenheit. Steel in its natural state doesn't qualify as hot until it's nearly a thousand degrees hotter than that—until it's painful to look at with the naked eye, until it's as runny as

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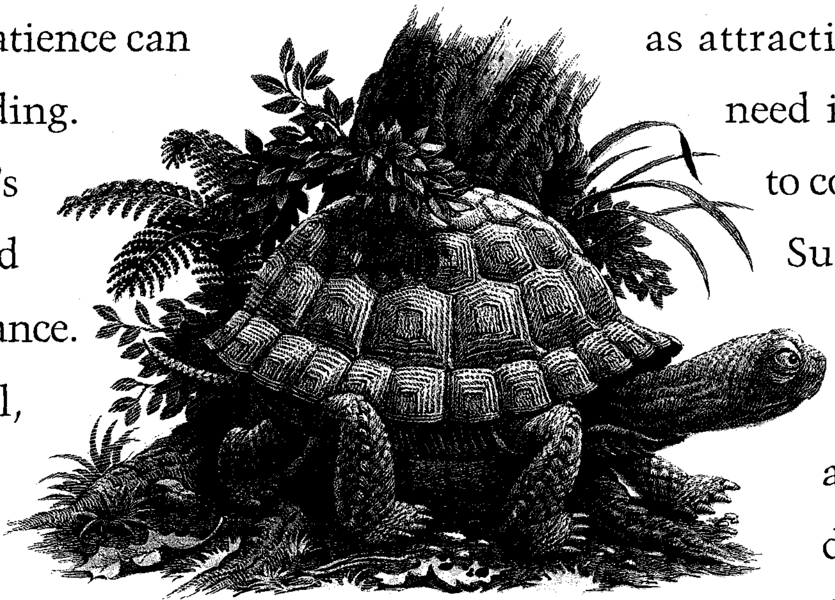

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water and dangerously unpredictable.

On Iverson's visits to Nucor steel mills, his pattern is always the same: he heads for the melt shop. A melt shop is a building as large as a cathedral. In a melt shop, shredded automobiles, sheared industrial machinery, and blocks of steel trash are melted inside electric-arc furnaces, huge kettles for cooking steel. A roar comes from a furnace. A crew of hot-metal men, drenched with sweat, hurry back and forth past an open door in the side of the furnace. A beam of light, like a spotlight, emerges from the door. Inside is a bubbling bath of live liquid steel, known to hot-metal men as a heat of steel.

Feeling the fascination, Iverson stands close to the furnace, with his hands in his pockets, contemplating the changes of hot metal. A restless, crawling fierce white light, tinted with orange, streams out through the furnace door. The light of hot metal is bright enough to varnish your face with a first-degree burn, like a sunburn, except that you could call it a steelburn. Iverson reaches up to the brim of his hard hat and flips down his pair of steelworker's dark glasses. Through the smoked glass he can see the structure of the heat, shining inside the furnace. "The steel almost looks—if it wasn't for the heat—it almost looks innocent," he says. "You have to be aware of how wild it can be."

Seen through dark glasses, a heat of steel has a weird structure. If the heat is calm, as it often is, the liquid metal has a luminous, mirrored surface, almost as shiny as mercury, except that it glows. To Iverson, a calm heat looks like a pool of cold water. But it throws off a black-body radiation, a light that comes as a result of iron atoms bumping around. The metal is at a temperature of 2900 degrees Fahrenheit. It swirls gently, as if it were being pecked by trout, and curdles of snow-white limestone slag float on its surface like blobs of ice drifting on a pond. The heat has a biting, skunky odor—a mixture of vaporized iron, carbon smoke, slag, and cooking firebrick. The metal looks innocent, but you can't forget that you're looking at live steel. Live steel can come to a boil in a flash. The term for that is "a carbon boil." A severe carbon boil can shake a steel mill to its foundations. Suddenly, something horrible churns against the furnace walls, trying to escape, throwing steaming hot metal out the door. It happens all the time. When it does, Iverson backs away from the furnace, sparks showering around him and drowning his outline in fire.

STARTING in about 1984, the top Nucor executives and the board of directors had eaten lunch nearly every day at Phil's Deli, in the Cotswold Shopping Center, across the street from the company's headquarters in Charlotte. The top executives and board of directors consisted of Iverson; H. David Aycock, Nucor's president; and Samuel Siegel, the chief financial officer. The three executives referred to Phil's Deli as "the executive dining room." These meetings were about the only times they met as a group to talk about the steel business, so most of the company's important decisions were made then. Huddled over toasted-cheese sandwiches at Phil's, the three executives had plotted hundred-million-dollar guerrilla raids against Big Steel in voices muffled by cheese.

The main question at Phil's Deli was how to transform Nucor into one of the world's great steel corporations. At the center of Nucor's hopes was a machine that would cast steel into a thin, flat strip. This machine would enable Nucor to manufacture sheet steel at low cost. The machine would bypass the high cost of rolling machines, which are the most expensive part of a steel mill. The only problem was that the machine did not exist.

Sir Henry Bessemer himself had first seen the possibilities of the machine. Bessemer, an English engineer of the nineteenth century, is known for his invention of the Bessemer converter, a jug-shaped furnace that converted liquid pig iron into steel. The Bessemer converter made it possible, for the first time, to manufacture plain carbon steel cheaply, by the ton. The contents of the Bessemer converter were poured into pots, yielding massive lumps of steel—ingots. The next problem was how to turn an ingot into a sheet or bar of steel. That required complex rolling machines. In 1857, a year after he invented the converter, Bessemer patented a strip-casting machine, for the direct casting of molten steel into a ribbon. The idea was to bypass the massive rolling machines. Bessemer's machine contained a funnel—today it is more properly called a mold—to gather a flow of liquid steel and deliver it down-

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ward between a pair of steel rolls, where the steel hardened into a thin strip, and then the strip was withdrawn from the machine in an endless ribbon. It was supposed to be a simple solution to what looked like a simple problem. When Bessemer poured steel into his machine, the machine welded itself together. He abandoned the experiment.

The second attempt came in 1891, when Edwin Norton, of the Fluid Metal Rolling Company, in Maywood, Illinois, built a machine that featured a pair of giant steel rolls, eight feet in diameter, between which molten steel was cast into a ribbon. Norton made several tons of steel ribbons and then ran out of money. He claimed success and tried to raise more money from investors, including Sir Henry. Skeptical by now, Bessemer refused, and Norton's dream ended with a stack of metal sheets, which may or may not have been commercially acceptable as sheet steel. For the next hundred years, the inventors kept trying and trying, and the busts went on and on, it being the nature of liquid steel to ravage the cuckoo clocks of inventors.

The hot-metal nightmares really got going in 1921, when an American inventor, Clarence W. Hazelett, began a fourteen-year series of experiments with a twin-roll strip-casting machine (U.S.A., 1921-35; a success with liquid brass, a bomb with liquid steel). Undeterred, Hazelett invented another steel-casting machine, the Hazelett ring caster (U.S.A., 1935-39; a failure). And there was Professor Ulitovsky's strip-casting machine (U.S.S.R., 1935-39; a failure). There was the Goldobin machine (U.S.S.R., 1938; a failure). There was Mr. J. M. Merle's machine (U.S.A., 1935-39; a failure). Near the end of his life, Clarence Hazelett got back in the game with a twin-belt steel-casting machine (U.S.A., 1954; "promising," but ended with Hazelett's death). Hazelett's son, R. William (Bill) Hazelett, carried on the old man's work with twin-belt steel-casting machines (U.S.A., Japan, and France, 1964-69; five failures). There was the Creusot-Loire machine (France, 1972; abandoned). There was the American Can thin-strip steelmaking machine (U.S.A., 1972-80; "phased out" by skeptical management). There was the LTV Steel Company's ring-casting machine (U.S.A., begun around 1963, abandoned in 1973, revived in 1985, abandoned in 1986 after an expenditure of ten to twenty million dollars). There was the first British Steel channel caster (Great Britain, 1975-79; abandoned). There was the *second* British Steel channel caster (1981 to present day; clinically dead, recently resuscitated). There was the Hitachi-Korf wheel-and-belt machine (Japan and Austria, 1980-85; rumored to be still "in development"). There was the British Steel "Sheffield Peeler" (Great Britain, 1982; weird, in that it "peeled" a solid ingot into a thin strip, the way a log is peeled into a sheet of veneer). There was the *fifth* campaign by the Hazelett Strip-Casting Corporation (U.S.A. and Japan, 1983-87; four machines; the company still has high hopes). There is the Osprey process (worldwide, 1972 to present day; it doesn't quite work). There is the Kawasaki-Hitachi vertical twin-belt caster (Japan, begun in 1983; seemed to be floundering, but said to have recently produced some "decent" slabs). There is Professor Nicholas Grant's liquid-dynamic compaction process at M.I.T. (U.S.A., seven years of effort; success claimed). There is the IRSID/Clecim machine (France, present day; still muddling along). There is the Nippon twin-drum caster (Japan, present day; "a delicate situation," in the words of one knowledgeable observer). There is the Concast "uphill" machine (Switzerland and New Jersey; no notable results). Finally, there is the Argonne National Laboratory's electromagnetic levitation process (U.S.A., 1984-88; supposed to hold liquid steel suspended in midair by means of magnetic fields, but has never been able to achieve stable levitation).

The inventors were troubled by a recurrent nightmare. The nightmare arose from the fact that most of a steel-casting machine's parts are themselves made of steel, and therefore the machine is apt to weld itself into a lump. It is like trying to manufacture ice by pouring water into a machine made of ice: freezeups and meltdowns are inevitable. A thin strip of steel hurries quickly through the machine, and rapid movement requires complicated machinery, and complicated machinery can be destroyed by hideous splashes of liquid steel. Spilled steel can start fires. Steel fires have a queer way of turning into vicious electrical fires, because when steel gets loose it runs everywhere, melting electrical cables. Liquid steel tends to form clots and icicles inside a machine—these objects are called skulls—and the skulls can lodge between moving parts, giving the machine a heart attack.

Molten steel will erode any material that it touches. The container has not yet been invented that will hold steel in a hot, fluid state for a reasonable period of time without being eroded, burned, or dissolved—not even Carborundum, graphite, tungsten, zircon, ruby, or fused sapphire. Diamond won't work: since it's pure carbon, steel dissolves it. Running steel cuts gullies in ceramic firebrick the way running water cuts through soil. Furthermore, the slag that comes along with steel can act as an acid or as a powerful caustic—liquid Drano at a couple of thousand degrees Fahrenheit.

The problem of how to cast a continuous strand of steel was partly solved by the invention of the so-called classical continuous-casting machine, which can cast a square or rectangular strand of steel—a billet or a thick slab. This major achievement was pioneered during the nineteen-twenties by a German inventor, Siegfried Junghans, and was brought to commercial success in the early nineteen-fifties by an American gadgeteer, Irving Rossi. The Junghans-Rossi classical continuous-casting machine is the prevailing technology for making a solid piece of steel.

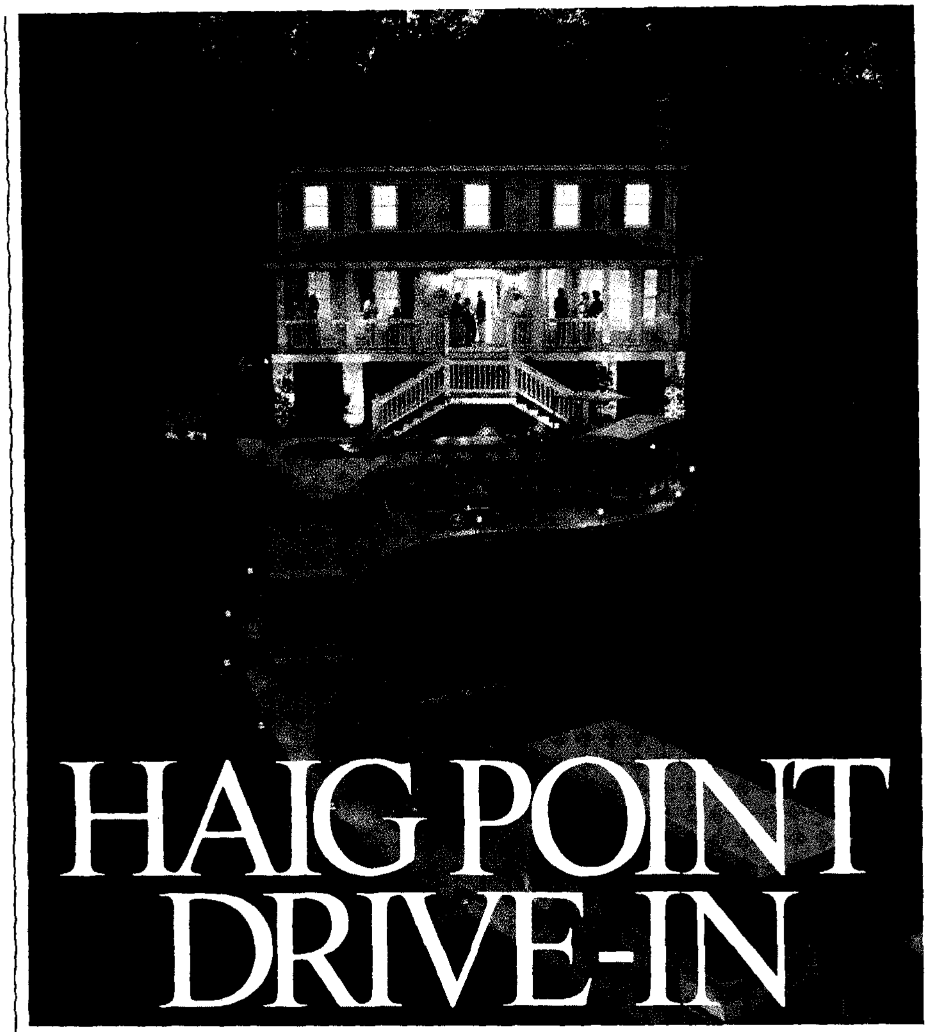
The secret of the Junghans-Rossi caster is a vertical box-shaped funnel, or mold, that oscillates up and down. Liquid steel is poured into the funnel, and as the funnel oscillates a rectangular piece of steel is withdrawn downward from the bottom of the funnel. The slab moves very slowly through the machine, being cooled with huge amounts of water. As the solid metal is extracted, it is cut into lengths. The slabs are then passed through a rolling mill to be elongated into sheet steel.

The problem with the classical steel-casting machine is that the slab it produces is as thick and wide as a queen-size bed mattress and about as long as a driveway. In order for a fat slab of steel to be crushed into a thin sheet, it must be passed through a train of mill stands, containing dozens upon dozens of rolls—a hot-strip rolling mill, typically a half mile long. It costs at least a billion dollars to build a hot-strip rolling mill capable of crushing a steel mattress into a sheet. That's why only Big Steel companies make sheet steel.

ON March 18, 1983, in the city of Düsseldorf, West Germany, an obscure engineer named Manfred Kolakowski had a sudden idea for a steel-casting machine. Kolakowski was an employee of SMS Schloemann-Siemag AG, a machinery firm headquartered in Düsseldorf. He saw in his mind's eye the Machine. Rumor has it that Kolakowski was sitting on the toilet at the time. ("No, no, no! I was sitting at my desk!" says Kolakowski. "The newspapers in Germany will try to make exciting stories of this.") In any case, Kolakowski had an idea, on the eighteenth of March, 1983, that changed the world steel industry. In German the word for a sudden idea is *Einfall*. It means a falling in. What fell into Kolakowski's mind was a vision of a three-dimensional shape. It was a funnel, or mold, for casting liquid steel into a very thin ribbon. The mold had curved, bulging sides, and it narrowed down into a slit.

Kolakowski's mold looked like a letter envelope that has been slit across the top and squeezed open. The funnel, made of copper, was narrow and flat, but it bulged in the center. It was a recurvate lens, with a swollen core and thin, bladelike edges. It was to be the heart of a steel-casting machine. The mold would cast steel downward through its slit into a train of rolls, between which the steel would harden into a thin slab, and the slab would be bent and withdrawn horizontally from the machine, in an endless ribbon. Oddly enough, Kolakowski's "revolutionary" design had a certain general resemblance to Sir Henry Bessemer's original, failed design of 1857, as if the first idea had really been the best one after all. Yet the Kolakowski mold was different in that it had lens-shaped faces. The experts had assumed that a lens-shaped mold would make a swollen, cracked piece of steel.

Kolakowski sketched his idea on a piece of paper and handed the sketch to a fellow-engineer at SMS Schloemann-Siemag AG. This engineer's name was Hans Streubel. Streubel began to think about the mold and, in talks with



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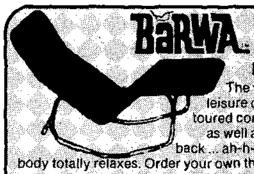

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AIG Issues Forum

Why reforming our liab America is to succee

EXCESSIVE LIABILITY AWARDS MAKE IT TOUGH FOR U.S. COMPANIES TO COMPETE.

We are a compassionate society. We want to compensate those who have suffered.

But when our courts expand the traditional concepts of liability, causing defendants to pay excessive compensation, we add to the costs we all pay for goods and services. We encourage companies to stop research and development on new products. And we even make it harder for American companies to compete overseas.

PAYING A HIDDEN TAX.

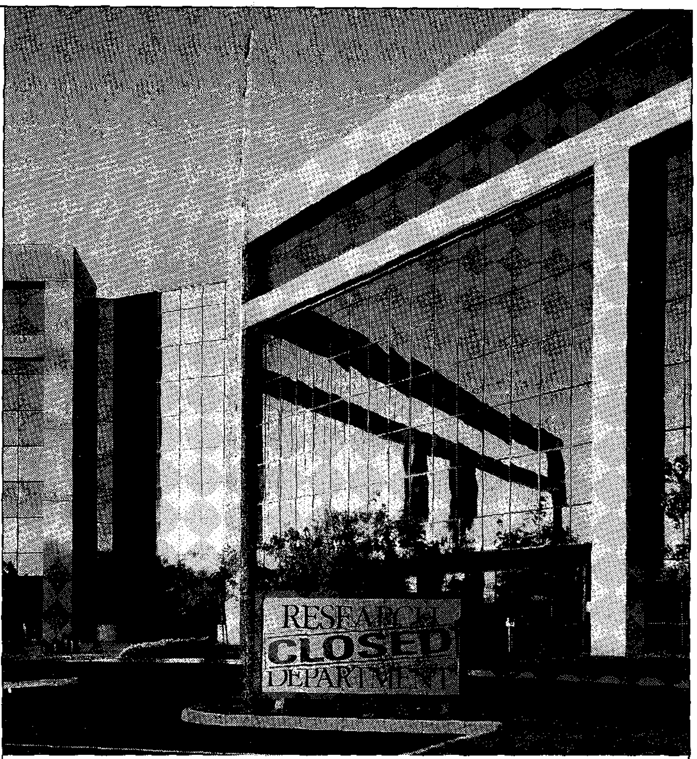
In reality, the American system of liability has become the source of a hidden tax on our economy—a tax that can account for as much as 50% of the price paid for a product.

What's worse, it has been estimated that this hidden tax amounts to $80 billion a year—a sum equal to the combined profits of the nation's 200 largest corporations.

Our economic competitors' legal systems do not encourage litigation to the extent we do. Consider, for example, that there are 30 times more lawsuits per capita in the U.S. than in Japan.

Is it any wonder that America is having a tough time competing in overseas markets?

UNCERTAINTY STIFLES ENTERPRISE.



The unpredictability of our liability system is also enormously costly to American competitiveness. For example, in a recent survey of CEOs, the Conference Board found that worry about potential liability lawsuits caused 47% of firms surveyed to discontinue one or more product lines. What's more, 25% stopped certain product research and development, and 39% decided against coming out with a new product. Meanwhile, our overseas competitors continue to research and develop new products at an ever-increasing pace.

ARE WE CONTROLLING RISKS OR INCREASING THEM?

When we give a drunk driver the right to sue an automaker or highway engineer for a million dollars after a crash, are we controlling risk?

Or just encouraging risky and careless behavior?

If you are a manufacturer, you can be sued even if your product has state-of-the-art safety features. Even if your customer misused it against your instructions. Even if the risks of misuse were obvious.

When fear of lawsuits causes physicians to limit

ity system is essential if n overseas markets.

services to patients—or worse, to abandon their practice altogether—lack of adequate treatment means greater risks for everyone.

Is this controlling risk or increasing it?

It's an unhealthy and dangerous situation that needs correcting.

WE MUST REFORM OUR "DEEP POCKETS" APPROACH TO LIABILITY.

Specifically, we need to change our approach and base liability suits on fault.

Our current system often encourages the frivolous suing of those with the ability to pay—in other words, those with "deep pockets." But does it make sense to hold such parties entirely liable, even if they were only minimally at fault?

A MORE RATIONAL APPROACH.

Those who suffer economic losses because of another's negligence should be fairly reimbursed. No one could argue with this principle. There should also be just compensation for pain and suffering resulting from real and severe injuries.

But can we afford to continue a system that encourages litigation and financial judgments bearing little direct relationship to fault or to the actual cost of injuries suffered?

Clearly, a better approach is needed.

CONGRESS HAS A ROLE.

Legislation providing a uniform product liability standard would allow American companies to compete without the burdens of excessive liability risks. And this would unclog the courts and put American business in a stronger position as barriers to international trade and investment fall.

There is proposed legislation before Congress dealing with these issues. A solution to the liability crisis is vital to American competitiveness, and Congress can play a role in restoring the right balance.

SO DO THE COURTS.

When all is said and done, our courts are the interpreters of our laws and our values. It's our values as a society that count, especially as reflected in the courts and individual jury decisions.

Together our legislative and judicial branches must recognize the damage being done to American competitiveness from the current liability system. And help America restore the proper balance.

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Kolakowski, made significant improvements in the design. Their employer, SMS, took out international patents on the copper funnel, and Manfred Kolakowski and Hans Streubel shared the patent award fifty-fifty. For the sake of brevity, I will call the funnel the Kolakowski mold.

SMS operates a foundry in a mountainous region of north-central Germany known to locals as the Siegerland —the sort of place where secret experiments could be conducted. SMS spent seven million dollars constructing a prototype of a Kolakowski-Streubel casting machine at the Siegerland foundry: a pilot machine with a funnel, rolls, motors, computers—the whole works. SMS put Manfred Kolakowski in charge of the pilot machine, and the company shrouded the project in secrecy, fearful that its competitors would steal the design.

In the privacy of SMS's Siegerland foundry, Kolakowski poured hot metal into his pilot machine. He got a mushroom cloud, a flash of flame, an ear-splitting roar—a type of industrial accident known all over the world by the English term "breakout." Undeterred, he poured different types of steel into the machine to see what would happen. The results were often frightening: torrents of liquid steel rushed through the machinery, and a siren went off, while German steelworkers scurried around with the impotent fury of ants coming out of a kicked nest, and yelled, "*Breakout! Breakout! Wir haben einen Breakout!*"

Kolakowski's campaigns drove on through breakouts, until by 1986 his machine was regularly producing thin slabs of carbon steel. The slabs were one and a half or two inches thick, and therefore easily rollable into sheets. SMS engineers got busy and drew up plans to link the casting machine directly to a train of four mill stands, in a miniature hot-strip rolling mill, which would crush the glowing slabs down to sheet steel and shoot out metal like Saran Wrap. It was an integrated manufacturing facility, a high-speed continuous-steelmaking machine. Two SMS design teams, under the leadership of Heinz Scholz and Max Münker, tied the parts together into one machine. And so was born the compact-strip-production machine, a design for the hottest racing engine in the steel industry.

In the spring of 1986, David Aycock, the president of Nucor, travelled to West Germany to inspect Kolakowski's pilot machine in the SMS foundry. That son of a gun is going to work, Aycock thought as he watched a strip of red-hot steel rumble out of it. Aycock told the Germans that Nucor might want to buy one of these. They were surprised, and told him that they didn't want to sell the machine to Nucor, at least not just yet. He returned to Charlotte and told Ken Iverson what he had seen. Iverson began a series of secret meetings with the German company. On December 7, 1986, a group of SMS executives flew to Charlotte for another secret meeting with Iverson. The Germans must have thought that something big was coming, because the delegation was led by a member of the managing board of directors of SMS, a certain Hans-Friedrich Marten. The Germans settled themselves on a fake-suède couch in Iverson's office and piled their blueprints on a coffee table, whereupon Iverson told them that Nucor was ready to proceed immediately with a steel mill containing a compact-strip-production machine. The Germans were stunned. They had expected the negotiations to continue for at least a year. They smelled a contract in the air, and they went for it.

Lights burned late in the Cotswold Building that night, and the next day the deal was concluded on a handshake between Iverson and Marten.

Iverson will not tell me how much he paid for the continuous-strip-production machine, but I gather that it was around seventy million dollars, or somewhat less than the price recently paid at Christie's for "Portrait du Dr. Gachet," by Vincent van Gogh. Chump change, for steelmaking equipment. Iverson got a money-back guarantee from the Germans: the Germans agreed that if their machine failed, Iverson would get his chump change back. Iverson, in turn, agreed to pay the Germans royalties from the machine's profits.

Iverson and the Germans also concluded a deal concerning the machinery for the cold mill (the third building at the Crawfordsville Project). Klöckner, a West German company, had recently closed an antiquated cold-rolling mill in Bavaria, and Nucor, with the help of SMS, bought the contents of the Klöckner mill for junk, at a price of around a million

"The sun goes up, the sun goes down. That's as deep as I get."

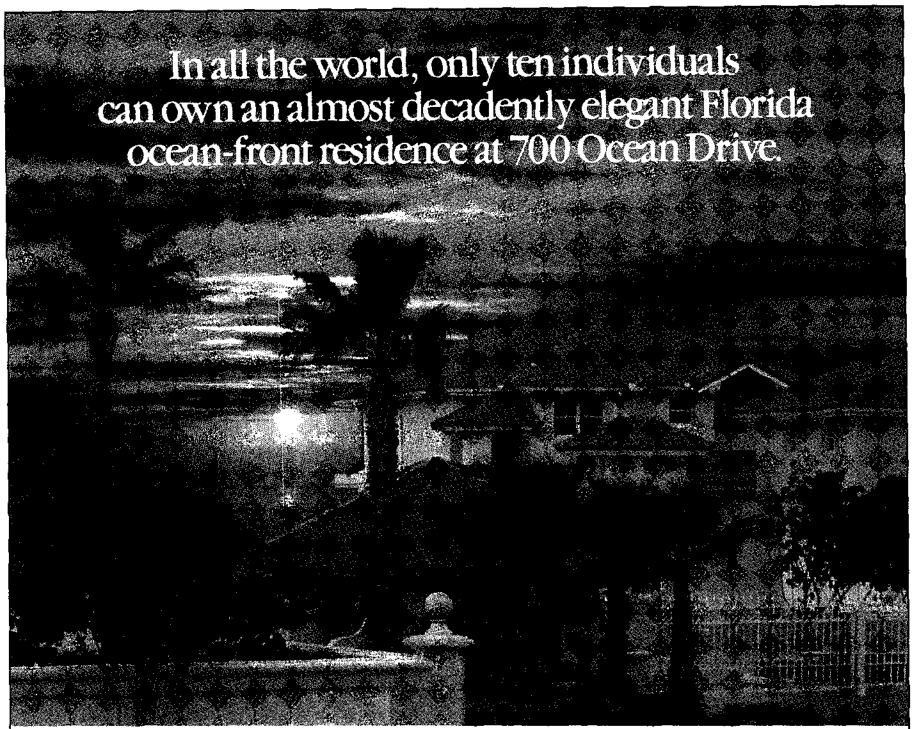
dollars. But the Klöckner machines were excellent machines, made by Voest-Alpine AG, the Austrian state manufacturing firm. SMS fixed them up for ten million dollars more. Iverson had now lined up the equipment for the Indiana cornfield.

CRAWFORDSVILLE (pop. 13,000), the county seat of Montgomery County, sits in the back yard of Big Steel. A hundred and twenty miles north of Crawfordsville is the southern shore of Lake Michigan—the Lake Shore, where the best steel mills in America are situated. Crawfordsville calls itself the Athens of Indiana. Lew Wallace, who wrote "Ben-Hur," once lived in a mansion near the center of town. One block off Main Street, a plastic sign that looks like a glowing pillow hangs over the door of the Scoreboard Lounge, inviting seekers of liquor and a game of pool to enter and make themselves at home. One evening in May, 1988, Keith Earl Busse, a Nucor vice-president and the general manager of the Crawfordsville Project, sat inside the saloon at a Formica table, with a group of Nucor managers and steelworkers. The air was thick with rock-and-roll music and shouts. A bachelor party was going on for a steelworker named Chris.

Busse leaned forward with his elbows on the table and looked at me. He had a fierce expression on his face, and his eyes were green. "I think Rome's on fire and we don't see it," he said. "Sometimes it seems that everybody coming out of school wants to go to Wall Street or be a lawyer. Everybody in this country is a *service* individual. We're a nation of ambulance chasers! How can you fix something if you don't know it's broke?" From a poolroom beside the bar came a clatter of pool balls and a yodel that ascended into a scream. "No one in this bar has ever built a steel plant before," Busse went on. "Most of 'em have never done construction of any kind. What better way is there to learn? The mind's a powerful thing."

A voice shouted from the poolroom, "Let's puke Chris! If Chris doesn't puke tonight, he should be fired!"

"Nucor is not afraid of youth," Busse said. More screams came out of the poolroom. Over the racket, Busse explained that Nucor's manufacturing employees—steelworkers, foremen, and mill managers—would manage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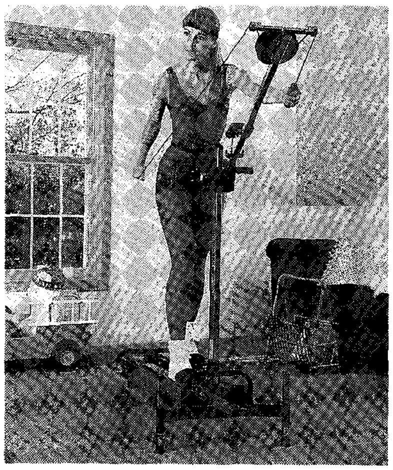

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the construction of the steel mill. They would hire and supervise construction firms to build the steel mill, and after the mill was built the steelworkers would tune up the machines and make steel. "If Big Steel really knew what we are capable of! If they only knew! They know, but they don't know. They pretend like we don't exist. They pretend like they aren't worried about us."

Keith Earl Busse (rhymes with "fussy") was the offspring of German Midwesterners, believers in the God of Martin Luther and in the value of Work with a capital "W." His father hadn't been able to send him to college, and he had paid his own way through junior college by pumping gas. Busse had a square face with a firm jawline. His hair—brown, bushy, and neat—fell in a fluff over his forehead. He wore Lee jeans and steel-toed boots. His arms were sinewy and thick. He was forty-five years old. "I'm the old man around here," he remarked, glancing down the table at his employees, who were in their twenties and early thirties, and most of whom were male.

Busse knew something about the design, construction, and operation of factories. He had designed and built the only operating standard-bolt factory in the United States, the Nucor plant. Virtually all the standard bolts in America except Keith Busse's are imported. A Busse bolt has a small letter "n" stamped on the head, which stands for "Nucor." You may be able to find Busse bolts at your local hardware store: look for the little "n," and then you know you're buying a bolt made from natural, clean, and mostly native busted automobiles.

Another of Keith Busse's specialties was negotiation. Busse would negotiate anything, whether it needed to be negotiated or not, and he had a known tendency to start arguments with Ken Iverson, which could turn into caterwauls, until Busse had got himself worked up enough to pace a room full of the company's general managers, slamming his fist into his palm and saying of the chairman, "God damn Ken Iverson! He pisses me off sometimes!"

Busse was an accountant by training, not a hot-metal man. He was a sharp-pencil boy with a background in bolts. To a hot-metal man, bolts are not hot metal, and Keith Busse therefore was almost a nobody. He also happened to be the biggest machine-gun dealer in northern Indiana: he ran a gun supermarket in Fort Wayne, where he might move twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of merchandise during a good week. That made a mildly favorable impression on the hot-metal men—those few who happened to know that Busse was selling machine guns. It wasn't enough to convince them that Keith Busse knew anything about the machines that manufacture steel, but automatic weapons were a step in the right direction. (The gun trade was only a profitable sideline for Busse; it had nothing to do with the Nucor Corporation.)

Busse maintained that he wasn't personally worried about anything. "With this steelmaking technology we've got, it's going to be Big Steel fighting a war against us with a bolt-action rifle when we've got a machine gun. But I don't know. Perhaps we are just a pimple on the camel's butt. I don't want to be cocky. We'll do the mill first and talk about it later."

A young guy sat down at the table near Busse with a mug of beer in his hand. "Wot's happening, Keith?" he said, in a British accent.

"I'm about to clean some people out," Busse replied. Busse stood up and said to me, "He's an Englishman. We found him as a stray dog. He was wandering around this country with a knapsack." Another yell flew out of the poolroom. Busse said to the Englishman, "I'll see you later. I'm going to win some money." He disappeared into the poolroom, into a wave of anarchic shouts: "Yo, Mr. Busse! Yo!"

The Englishman was Mark D. Millett. He was the manager of the melt shop, one of the three large buildings at the Crawfordsville Project. He was twenty-eight years old, a native of Plymouth, Devon. He had earned a bachelor's degree in metallurgy at the University of Surrey, outside London. After graduation, he came to the United States for a year—"to be a ski bum and to party," he told me. The idea was to learn how to ski while partying with American women. He wound up as a cook in a ski lodge in Colorado. "I'd stuff my face on the job and then starve for two days while I skied," Millett said. He eventually got a job with Nucor as an entry-level metallurgist, and cooked his face with first-degree burns, staring at liquid steel. "You come to earth in a severe bump," he said of his first good look at liquid steel.

The melt shop would handle all phases of liquid steel. The building would contain the twin electric furnaces (for melting steel), a metallurgy station (for refining steel), and the upper portion of the compact-strip-production machine, housed in a structure known as the casting tower. In the long glare of a hundred and thirty years of melted, failed machines, Iverson and Busse had given Mark Millett, an English metallurgist and ex-cook, twenty-eight years old, the assignment of pouring metal into the machine and making it work. If it worked, then an endless noodle of steel would emerge from the casting tower, and from there the noodle would be rolled and elongated into a sheet of steel. If something went wrong, the casting machine might literally blow up in Millett's face.

THE next day, Busse and Iverson are driving around the Crawfordsville Project in a pickup truck, wearing green Nucor hard hats. Busse is behind the wheel, pointing out progress to Iverson. Iverson grips the dashboard, and when the truck lurches he slides this way or that across the seat.

"A lot of people are saying the casting machine won't work," Busse says. "But I've had the revelation. I've seen the holes in the hands."

"I just *know* something won't work," Iverson says. "But there's enough talent around here to fix it."

"Our people are not sure what the beast is going to look like," says Busse.

"I'm not worried about the technology," says Iverson, hanging on to the dashboard and peering out the window. "What I'm worried about is the cost of starting up this mill and the amount of time the startup could take."

Busse drives the truck into the cold-mill building. It is a cavernous space, with unfinished walls open to the weather. Busse parks the truck. He and the chairman climb out, shake hands with a few steelworkers, descend a flight of stairs into a tunnel. They splash around in water at the bottom of the tunnel, Busse pointing out future locations of pipes to the chairman.

Meanwhile (according to Iverson's later recollection), something like the following thought is going through the chairman's mind: One of the things these managers like to do is take you down in tunnels when they're building a steel mill, to show you what they've done. I don't care if I ever go down in another tunnel.

The two men climb back up to ground level and get back into the pickup truck, and the truck leaps out of the cold mill into open country. Busse stops the truck with a jerk in a field of mud near the cold mill, and he and the chairman get out.

Four steel objects shaped like elongated doughnuts are lying flat on railroad ties that are floating in the mud. The doughnuts are thirty feet long, ten feet across, and four feet high, and, being made of cast steel, they are incredibly massive lumps of solid metal. They look like chain links, but they are actually roll housings. They will be set upright inside the cold mill, mounted in concrete. Roll housings are chassis structures that hold and support rolls, which are enormous cylinders of cast iron, like rolling pins, that roll steel flat.

Iverson wants to inspect a roll housing. He puts his foot up on a railroad tie, and heaves himself onto the roll housing. He stands on the forged steel, looking around. A gust of wind plucks at his necktie. Iverson is wearing pinstriped trousers stuffed into steel-toed boots. He kneels and runs his hand lightly over the steel.

Busse says, above a rising wind, "Every day, more crates of this stuff arrive."

Iverson grunts and straightens up and touches the brim of his hard hat, looking west. "How far does our land go?"

"All the way to those trees on the horizon." Busse is thinking, Room for more manufacturing facilities.

Puddles of water around the job site reflect the sky, and Iverson thinks, This job site is in terrible condition. I've had experience before with job sites in spring. We are already behind schedule. The mud this winter was very bad. With mud like that, you are stuck for three months and you can't

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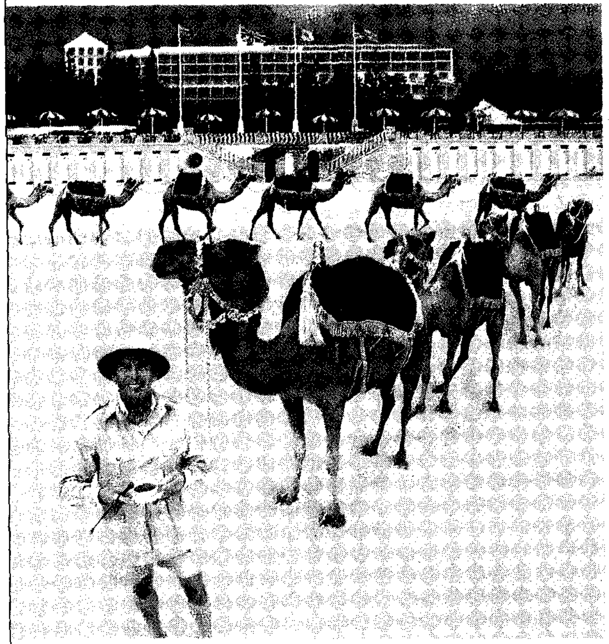

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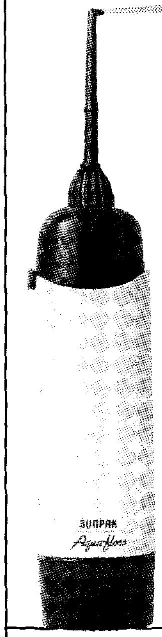

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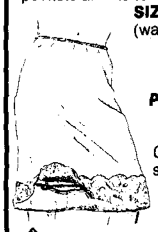

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do a thing. You can't even move the earth-moving equipment. All you can do is pump water out of the holes you've dug in the ground.

The question is the startup. The startup is now only a year away. It's the question of what will happen when hot metal is poured into the machine. The young people are going to learn about steel. "Everything is up to us now," Iverson says, with his hands in his pockets, scanning the holes that his company has dug in Indiana.

At the restaurant in the Holiday Inn in Crawfordsville, Iverson and Busse talk about the looming war with Big Steel. They have had a cocktail or two in the lounge, and now Busse is cutting into a sirloin steak, and Iverson, who always orders fish, even in the Midwest, is working on a piece of white pulp.

Busse is telling Iverson that he is worried about the future of the Nucor Corporation, that he is afraid Nucor could someday resemble Big Steel, and that would be the kiss of death. "How do we allow Nucor to grow without expanding the bureaucracy, Ken?" he asks. "When I go up to visit Big Steel, I see vice-presidents stacked on vice-presidents, research departments, assistants to assistants, all kinds of weird-ass relationships that I can't even understand."

Iverson nods, and cuts into his fish. "Yeah," he says. "They have in-house consultants to help them design a plant. Then after they've built it they hire an outside consultant to tell them if they've built it right."

"All those Big Steel companies are the same," Busse goes on. "They are a culture, it's a bureaucratic culture, and there isn't a nickel's worth of difference between 'em. But, I mean, Nucor is getting so big. We may need another layer of management to carry us into the next century." An idea lights up Busse's face. It's time for a negotiation with the chairman. Busse says, "Maybe we're going to need group vice-presidents."

Iverson's fork pauses over his fish. "Group vice-presidents! Keith, do you want to ruin this company?" A sly grin crosses Iverson's face. "That's the same old Harvard Business School thinking, Keith."

Busse has never been near the Harvard Business School in his life, and he takes the remark badly. "Well, all right then, Jesus Christ—be creative, Ken!"

"God damn it, Keith, I want us to be more creative than that—"

Busse tells his chairman, "Ken, don't give me that shit!"

"We don't need any group vice-presidents! All they do is get in the way! Because you have to include them in decisions!" Iverson is getting steamed, but he has a little rule of thumb: a good businessman is hard to bruise and quick to heal. At a moment like this, he tries to remember his rule. He says to Busse, "We could at least double our size before we really even need to think about a new layer of management. We could go to *two* billion dollars in sales without putting a strain on the staff."

Iverson has been saying this for years. For years, he has been telling financial analysts and business professors and his own managers that Nucor could double its sales without putting a strain on the corporate staff. In the meantime, Nucor has doubled its sales, and doubled them again, and doubled them again, and doubled them again, and doubled them again—five doublings, exponential growth—and Iverson is still telling everybody that Nucor could double its sales without putting a strain on the corporate staff. Nucor has mushroomed in splendor, wealth, and technical prowess, the Cinderella of the American steel industry, but the headquarters is still in a rented office beside a shopping center, just where it was twenty-two years ago.

Busse feels the pressure of a brilliant future hanging over the company, the possibility that a few C.S.P. machines could rapidly turn Nucor into one of the largest steel companies in the United States.

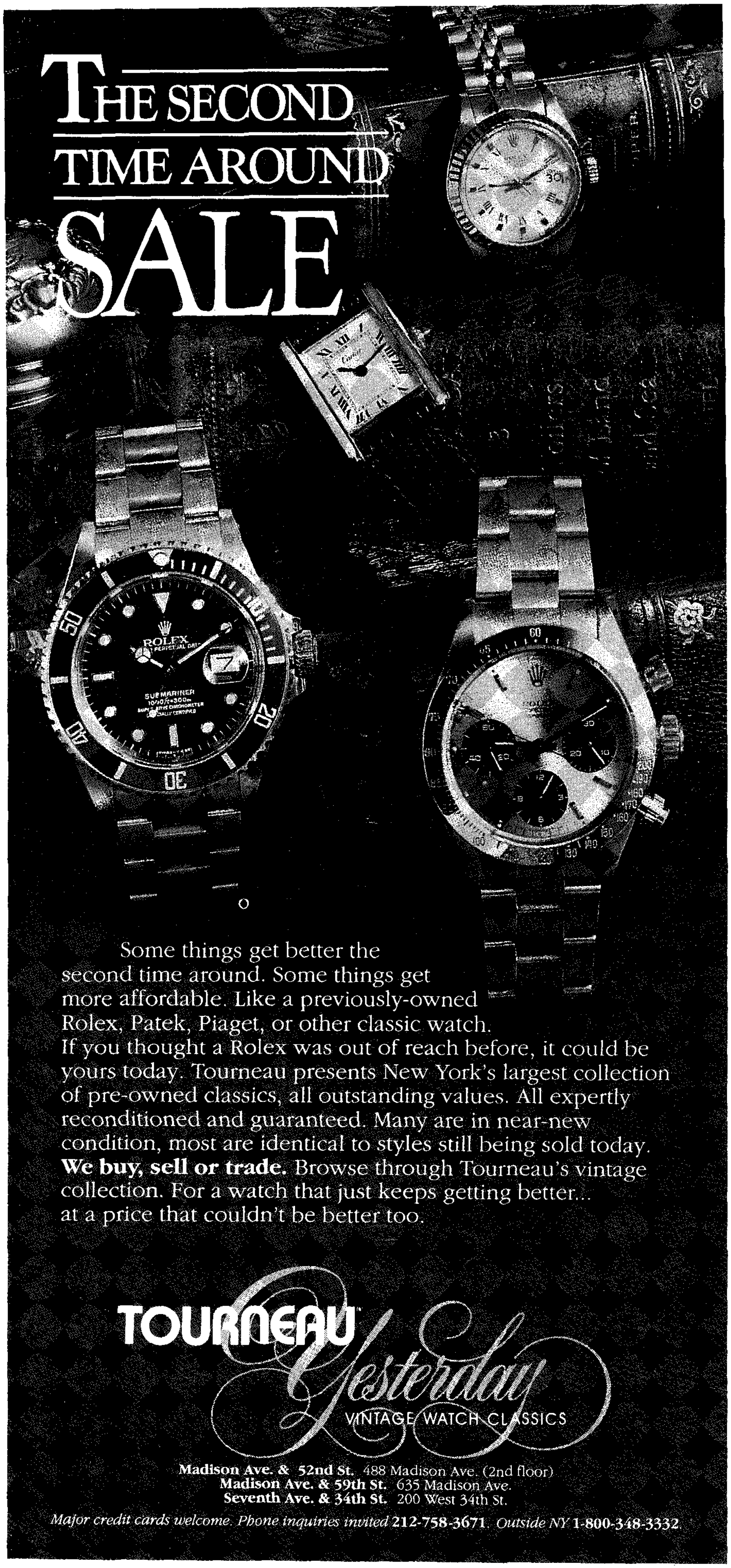
Iverson thinks that Busse worries too much. "Keith, I hope that by the time we have group vice-presidents I'll be collecting Social Security."

Iverson stays that night in the Holiday Inn, in a single room (forty-four dollars) looking out on a feed hopper. The next morning, he flies alone back to Charlotte. He always flies tourist class, and on a supersaver ticket when he can get one. Top executives of other Fortune 500 companies, anxious to meet Ken Iverson, eager to learn a few management tips from the chairman of the extraordinary Nucor Corporation, sometimes offer Iverson a free ride on a corporate jet if they are heading for the same destination as he is. But he always refuses; he doesn't want Nucor's steelworkers to see him stepping off a corporate jet.

FRANCIS KENNETH IVERSON grew up in Downers Grove, Illinois, when it was a small town, twenty miles west of Chicago. In his youth, he was known as Fran. His father was an electrical engineer who worked for the Western Electric Company. The Iverson family spent weekends and summers on a big farm on the Fox River, to the northwest of Downers Grove, which was owned by Fran's (Ken's) grandparents. The farm encompassed a large tract of rolling cornfields and sections of timber. He liked to roam the farm, hang out by the river. "I did everything a kid would do—I smoked corn silk, I went skinny-dipping in the Fox River," Iverson told me. He enlisted in the Navy during the Second World War under the Navy's V-12 program, and the Navy sent him to Cornell University. After the war, Iverson went on to graduate school at Purdue University and got a master's degree in mechanical engineering, with a minor concentration in hot metal. "I wanted to study something completely empirical, and that was metallurgy," he said. "At that time, there was no link between metallurgy and physics. A lot of things about steel were unexplained then, and they still aren't explained today. We know the crystalline transformations of steel, but we don't know *why* steel forms certain crystals—it just does. There is an art to making steel."

In 1952, Iverson took a job as the chief engineer at the Illium Corporation, a foundry in Freeport, Illinois, that operated in a five-car garage. One day, the Illium Corporation received a contract to produce some alloy tubes for making pork-sausage casings, so Iverson designed and built a cheap casting machine. As he was demonstrating it to the company's board of directors, there was a cracking sound, and glowing liquid alloy began to spit out of the machine. The directors knocked each other down trying to escape from the garage, with Iverson at their heels, while the machine uttered a maniacal groan and fired a vicious burst of hot metal through the roof. "That was the last time the board of directors ever visited the garage," Iverson said.

After a couple of other jobs involv-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ing liquid metals, Iverson ended up in Phoenix, Arizona, as a group vice-president of the Nuclear Corporation of America, which had begun its existence in 1904 as the Reo Motor Car Company. Reo had had its ups and downs. It went bankrupt in 1938, then emerged from bankruptcy as Reo Motors, Inc., a manufacturer of trucks and lawnmowers. Lawnmowers couldn't save the company, and by 1955 Reo Motors had become a hollow shell of its former self. It was taken over that year in a hostile merger and was transformed into the Nuclear Corporation of America, with offices in the Empire State Building and plans to become the General Motors of the atom. But the atom went nowhere for Nuclear, and by 1962, when Iverson joined the company, Nuclear was a troubled mini-conglomerate with businesses that included radiation sensors, air-conditioning equipment and ducts, semiconductors, steel joists, rare earths, and a top-secret research group that was trying to develop a new machine for manufacturing tin cans. In 1965, Nuclear defaulted on two bank loans and headed straight for bankruptcy.

"I became president by default," Iverson told me. "No one else wanted the job." The company's board of directors named Iverson president on August 9, 1965, and named Samuel Siegel, then the controller for Nuclear, the chief financial officer. Siegel is still the C.F.O., although the company has since been renamed Nucor.

Siegel believes that on the day Iverson took control Nuclear was ready to file for protection from its creditors under Chapter 11. Iverson and Siegel scrambled to wrap up negotiations for a commercial loan to pay off the defaulted bank loans, and got the new loan approved on August 13th, four days after Iverson became president, by pledging virtually all of Nuclear's so-called assets as collateral for the loan. They then sold off most of those assets, in order to stop the bleeding and raise a pittance of cash. The company's only profitable unit was a certain division known as Vulcraft, a manufacturer of steel joists, with factories in South Carolina and Nebraska. (Steel joists are lacy structures of welded bar steel, used to support roofs and floors of office buildings and shopping malls.) Iverson felt that the Nuclear Corporation of America ought to concentrate on steel joists, so he elected to move the company's headquarters from Phoenix to Charlotte, North Carolina, to be closer to the Vulcraft plant in South Carolina.

The Vulcraft joist business provided positive cash flow, which turned into reportable earnings for the Nuclear Corporation of America. Nuclear earned its profit by purchasing bar steel from large American steel companies, welding the bar steel into roof joists, and selling them, under the Vulcraft brand name. Nuclear's main supplier of bar steel was United States Steel. Much to the concern of Ken Iverson, U.S. Steel kept raising the price of its bar steel, until by 1966 it was charging more for a ton of bar steel than Nuclear could get for a ton of finished roof joists. His company once again threatened with extinction, this time because of the high price of American steel, Iverson began to travel through Europe, trolling for cheap steel, and he bought steel in Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Poland. The Polish steel buckled when it went into the roofs of shopping centers, and the Nuclear Corporation of America had to send out a fleet of trucks to take the steel back from its customers. "We didn't tell them it was Polish steel," Iverson says.

It was not a good situation, so Iverson went back to U.S. Steel as a customer. This time, he bargained hard and got a contract in which U.S. Steel agreed to supply Nuclear with bar steel at a price just slightly higher than the dockside price of the cheapest imported steel. It was a sweet deal for the Nuclear Corporation of America.

Iverson didn't like having to buy steel from anybody. He thought it made financial sense for Nuclear to make its own steel, and he decided to build a small steel mill to supply bar steel to the Vulcraft plants. Bar steel, known also as long bar or merchant bar, consists of round bars, flat bars, channels, and angle irons—skinny pieces of steel, usually either twenty or forty feet long.

Iverson hoped to sell his mill's excess production of bar steel on the American market. He now claims that in the beginning he had no idea that Nuclear would one day hang up and gut Big Steel's markets for bar steel. "We wanted to put something together to compete with the foreigners," he said. "They were the ones we really targeted."

He could not afford to build a blast furnace for smelting iron ore—at that time, a blast furnace, along with the necessary coke ovens and a sintering plant (which makes iron-ore pellets), could cost nearly half a billion dollars—but there was an alternative, and that was an electric-arc furnace, a kettle for melting metal scrap. At that time, an arc furnace cost about a million dollars. It was much cheaper to make steel out of junk than out of iron ore. Iverson decided to locate his miniature steel mill in the town of Darlington, South Carolina, which stood in the middle of soybean fields not far from the original Vulcraft joist plant. Iverson borrowed six million dollars from the Wachovia Bank, in Charlotte, and began construction of the steel mill in 1968. Nuclear was far too small a company to be building steel mills, and he knew it. "We played Bet-the-Company," Iverson said. What he really wanted to do was to make steel, because he was a hot-metal man.

The Nuclear Corporation of America melted its first heat of steel on June 26, 1969, at the new minimill in Darlington. "We had about twenty steelworkers then," Iverson says. "They were carpenters and butchers and sharecroppers. We had one guy who was an adding-machine salesman." It was a non-union work force, utterly innocent of contact with liquid steel. On the day of the first heat, the sharecroppers moved nervously around the melt shop, smoking cigarettes and frequently visiting the lavatory. A crane dumped twenty tons of shredded junk into the arc furnace and Iverson gave an order for the startup to commence.

The arc furnace was shaped like a pot, and it had three carbon electrodes, which could be lowered into the pot to cook the junk inside it. The electrodes descended into the junk with a great fizz, there was a flash brighter than the sun, and a mushroom cloud punched to the roof of the steel mill. It was what they call a long-arc meltdown. Iverson had tapped twelve million watts of electricity out of Carolina Power & Light at the flip of a switch. The drain sent echoes back through the power grid, causing lights to flicker all over South Carolina. The roar of melting steel was so loud that the "steelworkers" couldn't hear their own voices screaming in terror, and they began to run from one side of the melt shop to the other, yelling confused orders at each other. The noise seemed to open the sutures in their skulls, and a skunky odor filled the building, the reek of a long-arc meltdown. Iverson stood with his hands in his pockets, enjoying the show. When the junk had merged into a bath, the arc furnace was tipped over and liquid steel ran into a ladle, like tea running from a teapot into a cup. That process is known as tapping the heat. Then came a normal occurrence at the tapping of the heat—a blossom of sparks exploded from the ladle and rained slowly down through the building, drenching the employees in fire.

They really started screaming. Suddenly, they quit. The entire furnace crew threw away its tools and ran into the soybean fields. Once the men had got into the fields, they gathered in a knot, squinting at the melt shop, expecting it to blow up.

Iverson was left alone beside the furnace with one experienced melter. Iverson didn't know what to do. His work force had just quit, and there was a ladle of hot metal sitting on the floor. The melter had an idea. He ordered a crane operator (who had remained inside the building, in the cab of a crane) to pick up the ladle and pour its contents back into the furnace. Once the furnace was engorged with hot metal, the melter climbed onto the lip of the furnace and walked in a circle around the lip, so that the sharecroppers could see him outlined against the glare. "When they saw him do that, they kind of crept back into the building," Iverson said. "My melter poured the steel back into the ladle again"—tapped the heat again, that is—"and the crane took the ladle up to the casting tower, and we poured steel into the casting machine."

At the top of the casting machine was a funnel, for gathering the flow of liquid steel. From the base of the funnel a strand of solidifying steel began to emerge. Suddenly, the casting machine melted down. It drenched itself with liquid steel. That is, it broke out. A hot-metal cascade splashed down three stories through the casting tower, with a great uproar and a cloud of smoke. The sharecroppers ran back and forth, gasping with fear, lost in smoke, while a foreman shouted "Breakout! Breakout!" and sirens went off.

Breakouts are not uncommon. A typical breakout happens when a strand of partly solidified steel inside the machine breaks apart. The strand has a liquid core and a thin skin, like a water balloon tensely full of water. The balloon pops, and liquid steel gushes down through the machinery with a deafening roar and a great, billowing rush of smoke, steam, and flames. The fires die down and the machine cools off, exhaling clouds of smoke. Its guts are now welded together with steel. Steelworkers climb inside the machine and go to work with wrecking bars, cold chisels, and cutting torches, prying and chipping and slicing gobbets of steel away from the casting machine's moving parts.

It took the farmers and the adding-machine salesman about a year and a half to learn how to handle hot metal. The plant startup dragged on month after month, putting the Nuclear Corporation of America under increasing financial strain. "We had immense problems with the casting machine," Iverson said. "We wondered if it would ever work. I was convinced that it would work, but I was down there on the floor of the mill watching the machine go through breakout after breakout."

Simultaneously, the Nuclear Corporation of America was having a breakout of cash. The company blew cash like an open fire hydrant, to the point where a default on the debt, followed by a quick filing for bankruptcy, was beginning to look like a real possibility. Nuclear's stock, having risen to more than three dollars a share, crashed to ninety-seven cents. Iverson began to be troubled by insomnia. He felt drawn to the steel mill and its problems. In the fall and winter of 1969, he kept driving to Darlington from Charlotte and staying at the mill all night; since he wasn't sleeping anyway, he might as well be at the mill.

"Night after night, I'd be down on

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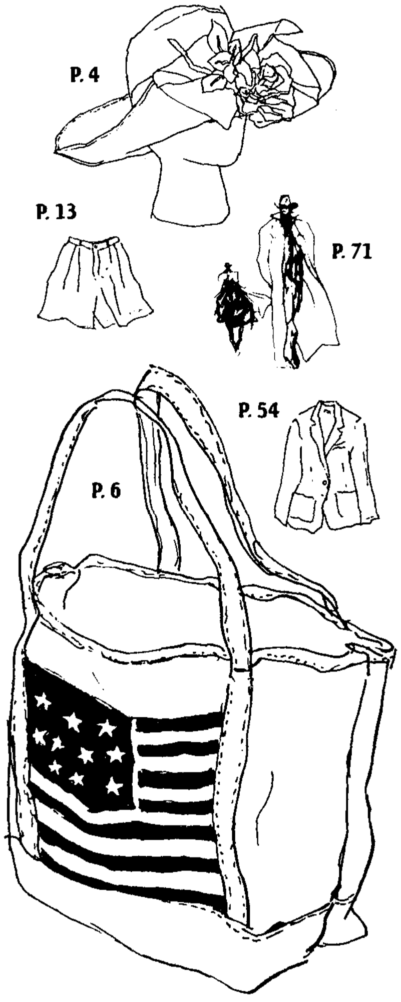

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the floor at midnight, while the people were trying to get the caster to work, and we had been having breakout after breakout," Iverson recalled. "One day, a fellow came in wearing a black leather jacket, riding a motorcycle." The guy was a biker, looking for a job. "He had never been in a steel mill before," Iverson said. The plant manager hired the biker on the spot and put him to work on the casting machine. "On this kid's first day at work, we got a good cast going," Iverson said. A red-hot billet of steel began to emerge slowly from the base of the machine, and everyone got the sweet feeling that hot-metal men get when steel comes out of a machine. "Then some hydraulic valves blew off the machine," Iverson said. A couple of broken hoses squirmed around, lashing hydraulic fluid across red-hot steel, sending up clouds of smoke. "This kid straddled a hot billet of steel—he stood with his legs apart over a piece of red-hot steel coming out of the caster—and he held the broken hydraulic hoses together with his hands. I was terrified he would burn himself. The hoses blew apart again, and he got hydraulic fluid in his eyes. We took him down to wash his eyes out, and he turned to me and said, 'This is the best job I ever had!' He was a hot-metal man, only he didn't know it."

By the end of 1970, the ex-sharecroppers had finally taught themselves how to make steel. At first, the mill sold bar steel to Nuclear's Vulcraft joist division, but then production picked up, and the mill began to sell bar steel up and down the Eastern Seaboard, and the mill became extraordinarily profitable for the Nuclear Corporation of America. In 1972, Iverson changed the name of the company to Nucor, since there wasn't anything nuclear about plain carbon steel. Nucor's earnings, which had been depressed by the start-up, rose a hundred and forty per cent between 1970 and 1971, from $1.1 million to $2.7 million, and then went up seventy per cent the following year, to $4.6 million. The steel mill in Darlington was a gold mine.

In 1974, Iverson completed a second electric steel minimill, in Norfolk, Nebraska. In 1975, he completed a third electric steel minimill, in Jewett, Texas. In 1980, he built Nucor's fourth electric steel minimill, in Plymouth, Utah. Meanwhile, he was also building joist factories, and as Nucor moved into the joist business it ruined Republic Steel's joist business (Republic later went bankrupt), and Bethlehem Steel and other Big Steel companies moved out of the joist business. Today, one of every three new factories, shopping malls, and office buildings has a roof or floors supported by Nucor Vulcraft steel. Then Iverson started building decking plants. Steel decking, which is made from sheet steel that Nucor buys from Big Steel companies, is used as a floor support in office buildings—it is placed on top of steel joists. Nucor's earnings hit big new highs in the later seventies—eight million dollars, twelve million, twenty-five million, forty-two million, geometric growth in profits—and the stock price soared. Then Nucor's growth levelled off, as other minimill companies began to put pressure on Nucor's profit margins.

The American minimills destroyed Big Steel's markets for bar steel and roof joists. They also essentially killed the importation of bar steel into the United States. No foreign steel companies could compete with the small American steel mills on their own turf, because the small American mills were arguably among the most efficient steel mills anywhere in the world. But the Nucor Corporation now faced vicious competition from other non-union American minimills. The little mills haunted Nucor in the way that Nucor haunted Big Steel—and some of the little mills weren't so little, either. Nucor's American competitors made bar steel under aggressive local names: Hurricane Industries, Border Steel, Bayou Steel, Chaparral Steel, Florida Steel, Cascade Steel Company, Seattle Steel, Birmingham Steel, Roanoke Electric Steel, North Star Steel. Nucor was trapped in the borderland between bar steel and greatness.

THE American steel industry emerged from the Second World War the largest and most modern steel industry on earth, engorged with capital and boasting the latest machines. In 1951, Benjamin Fairless, the president of United States Steel, was pleased to reflect, "Americans don't like to take second place in any league, so they expect their steel industry to be bigger and more productive than the steel industry of any other nation on earth. It is; but what many Americans do not know is that their own steel industry is bigger than those of all other nations on earth put together."

Life went along beautifully for Big Steel's executives on the golf courses in Bermuda and at the private hunting lodges in Canada, but out in the mills things were not going so smoothly. One of the biggest problems was that machinery was growing old. Meanwhile, the Europeans and the Japanese were rebuilding their steel industries out of the rubble of the war, trying to leapfrog American steel with new inventions, with new ways of making steel, with oxygen furnaces, with electric steel minimills. American steel executives weren't interested in new inventions; in their opinion, the Second World War blast furnaces worked fine. When they did install new equipment in a mill, it was often a mature generation of machinery, installed just as a new generation of machinery

ON THE OLD WAY

After twelve years and a death
returning in August to see the end of summer
French skies and stacked roofs the same grays
silent train sliding south through the veiled morning
once more the stuccoed walls the sore
pavilions of the suburbs glimpses
of rivers known from other summers leaves
still green with chestnuts forming for their
only fall out of old dark branches and again
the nude hills come back and the sleepless
night travels along through the day as it
once did over and over for this was the way
almost home almost certain that it was
there almost believing that it could be
everything in spite of everything

—W. S. MERWIN

• •

was coming onstream in Europe and Japan. It seemed that the managements at Big Steel had become reluctant to bet money on inventions. They tried to avert risk, and in trying to avert risk they took huge unacknowledged risks. As the nineteen-eighties ripened, two hundred and eighty-four thousand American steelworkers lost their jobs, in a wave of bankruptcies and plant closings. Seventy per cent of the steelworkers in America lost their jobs.

There are altogether too many reasons for the failure of the American steel industry—greedy labor unions, bungled government policy, inflation, foreign competition—but ultimately it was a failure of management. The managers came up through the best business schools in America and up through the soundproofed meeting rooms of a corporate bureaucracy, yet they never understood how to invest money shrewdly in manufacturing technology, and the task of managing giant steel companies was not made easier by the fact that they never much cared for the men on the bottom who made the steel. They were never able to inspire the hot-metal men to do much of anything except go out on strike.

Between 1977 and 1987, fifty million tons of annual capacity was stripped out of Big Steel. That is, mills were closed all over the place, or pieces of mills were shut down, the workers fired. Industrial machinery capable of making fifty million tons of steel per year was torn apart, abandoned, or in some cases sold to foreign steel producers. Fifty million tons of capacity. Fifty Crawfordsville Projects. It is safe to say that there was not one major steel company in America that did not stare bankruptcy in the face. One-fourth of the industry did go bankrupt. Americans ended up supplying only eleven per cent of the world's need for steel. The great steel mills that stretched for miles along the Monongahela River, and along the Ohio River, and in Cleveland, Birmingham, Buffalo, Houston, Seattle, and St. Louis became iron tombs infested with sumac and burrs.

Big Steel, shrunken and humbled but by no means ready to die, survived. It had been a devastating war. Through nothing short of heroic efforts, ruthless efforts—plant closings, mass layoffs, and new investments in productivity—Big Steel's managers stabilized their companies. By 1989, the giant steel mills along the shore of Lake Michigan, in northern Indiana, were making steel more efficiently than ever, but there was an undercurrent of nervousness at Big Steel. The nervousness concerned the small American steel companies—in particular, Nucor. What if Iverson cloned his machine at scattered sites all over the United States? One or two major American steel companies might go bankrupt or have to take whole operating divisions out behind the barn to be shot. Big Steel executives were taking precautions. According to one financial analyst who specializes in the steel industry, they started a whisper campaign along Wall Street and among commercial bankers and with potential customers of Nucor, saying that Iverson's machine would fail. They implied that even if Iverson's machine worked it would manufacture brittle, speckled, warped, worthless sheets of steel—D.M., distressed material. You want to buy D.M. from Nucor? Because that's what you're probably going to get from Nucor—D.M. If Iverson's machine manufactured a million tons of D.M., then, obviously, Nucor would go into financial shock, Nucor would struggle to refinance its short-term debt, Nucor's stock would drop like a brick on the New York Stock Exchange, and Ken Iverson's foray into the sheet-steel market would turn into a massive writeoff for Nucor, and that might force Iverson into retirement—a mere footnote to American steel.

THE sixty-first floor of the USX Tower in Pittsburgh. The office of Thomas C. Graham, the president of U.S. Steel. (He has since become a vice-chairman.) U.S. Steel is officially known, these days, as the USS division of the USX Corporation. A line of huge windows in Tom Graham's office looks south across the Monongahela River through blue air, because most of the steel mills of Pittsburgh are no more. Tom Graham is a short, partly bald man in his sixties—a physically quiet man, in steel-rimmed glasses, who hardly moves, sitting in a black leather chair beside a coffee table. He reminds me of a family physician. He is said to have the respect of the unionized steelworkers in his company. "Nucor has consciously and skillfully worked the analysts," he says. "But

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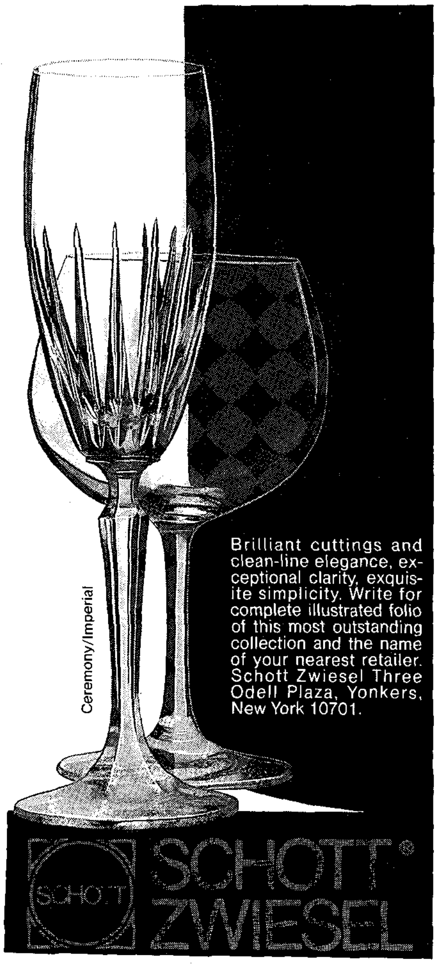

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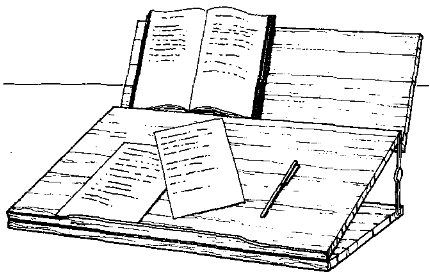

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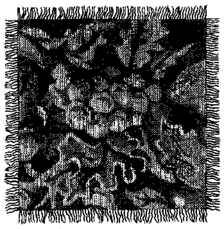

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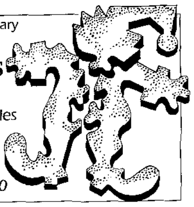

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Nucor is a lot more like us than Nucor would like to admit. We tore three layers of management out of this company after I became president. Welcome to the club, Nucor." One side of Graham's mouth puckers in a smile, and his steel-rimmed glasses reflect the blue sky.

In 1983, David Roderick, then the chairman of U.S. Steel, brought in Tom Graham as the chief operating officer of the company's steel businesses to save them from what looked like insolvency. Graham closed steel mills left and right. He stripped fourteen million tons of annual capacity out of U.S. Steel—fourteen Crawfordsville Projects—cutting the lard out of the company. At the same time, he invested enormous sums of money in continuous-casting machines, trying to get U.S. Steel back up to international standards of efficiency in the making of steel. When he became president, the company needed eleven man-hours of labor to make a ton of steel; now U.S. Steel makes steel with about four man-hours per ton, and that is on a par with the labor efficiency in Japan. Tom Graham nearly tripled U.S. Steel's labor efficiency. He did it partly with the help of so-called contract labor—outside workers who work alongside the company's unionized steelworkers.

"You know, there are all these myths about the steel industry," Graham says. "That we're dinosaurs. That we're lousy managers. That we're not technically progressive. When Lee Iacocca goes on TV and says, 'We're offering a hundred-thousand-mile warranty on the body of every Chrysler car,' nobody credits the American steel industry. There's a lot of American steel in that Chrysler car. That steel doesn't rust, and that's why Lee Iacocca can make his guarantees."

"What went wrong?"

"This is all in hindsight, but we let our labor costs get away from us," he replies. "We didn't pay attention to foreign competition. We didn't pay enough attention to the marketplace."

"What about the idea that you didn't invest in new technology?"

"No!" he says. "I don't put much in that theory. The American steel industry is not homogeneous. That's a red herring."

"Would you ever build a compact-strip-production plant?"

"It's a free country. We're looking at everything," Graham says, with a little smile.

IVERSON paid the Nucor steelworkers a wage that consisted largely of production bonuses. If they made a lot of steel and made it well, they also made good money. The Nucor steelworkers' wage has recently been running at about thirty-five to forty thousand dollars a year, which is equal to unionized steelworkers' pay. Unlike a union wage, the Nucor wage is more bonus than anything else.

The bonus system evolved at Nucor. At first, the bonuses were small. But they seemed to grow of their own accord. Iverson was surprised to see the bonuses becoming larger every year, as the steelworkers became more experienced at manufacturing steel and discovered ways to increase their productivity, in order to raise their bonuses. Iverson says that he was shocked when steelworkers' bonuses began to exceed a hundred per cent of their base pay, but since the system was bringing large productivity gains he decided not to touch it. Iverson wanted to let the steelworkers make steel as they saw fit, or so he claimed. "When there's a deep-seated conflict between management and labor, it's because of autocratic management practices. A manager *says to himself, 'I'm going to make the* guy do it,' not 'I'm going to help him do his job.' You can't *make* a person do something."

Many of the Nucor factories had been visited by labor organizers, and, according to Iverson, none of the factories had mustered the initial vote needed to start a union election. Iverson did not always handle union threats with sweet talk. It was pretty clear that if a Nucor plant voted to join a labor union Iverson might decide to sell off the plant, or even close it down. As Keith Busse expressed it, "If the unions took over one of our plants, we would turn as mean as a junk-yard dog."

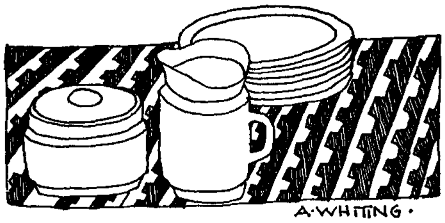
"We're against labor unions," Iverson said. "It's not the union pay scale that we object to; it's the work rules." The Nucor workers earned pay that was double or triple the average laborer's pay in the small towns where Nucor built its mills. Nucor gave its employees their bonuses every week, so they didn't have to wait around for the end of the year to see what kind of spare change the management might chuck in their direction after it had decided upon its own bonuses. Iverson also gave the Nucor production workers a steady ten per cent of the Nucor Corporation's pre-tax profits every year for their retirement plans. Since the company's profits varied from year to year, the steelworkers had no idea how much money they would be worth when they retired. When an employee retired, Nucor paid him his retirement savings in a lump sum, or as a pension, if the employee wanted it that way. Some Nucor steelworkers who had been with the company since the Darlington startup now had more than two hundred thousand dollars in the bank, sitting in their individual Nucor retirement plans, waiting to be drawn when they retired, and a portion of that wealth was laid up in the form of Nucor stock. If Nucor's stock were to grow rapidly in value, some of the longtime employees might get a check for half a million dollars when they retired. On the other hand, if the Crawfordsville Project failed and Nucor's stock dropped in value every steelworker at the company would have a diminished nest egg. Nucor production workers received some college-tuition money for their children, amounting to eighteen hundred dollars a year for each child in college. Iverson did not lay anybody off, although he never promised not to lay people off. So far, he has managed to run the company for twenty-five years without a layoff—except once, when a Nucor general manager laid off forty Nucor workers. Iverson ordered the manager to rehire the workers, and soon afterward he fired the manager. The message was not lost on the company's other managers. There has not been a layoff at Nucor since.

Nucor's steelworkers work in production teams of about thirty people, all of whom are responsible for the efficiency of the team. The rules are strict, verging on ruthless. The pressure to keep up production comes from the rules, and the rules are enforced by the production team itself. If one member of the team is late for work or doesn't show up, the paychecks of all thirty members of the team can be damaged that week. The reaction to absenteeism at Nucor is swift and unpleasant, and comes from other members of the production team rather than from managers. Members who become sick may try to struggle through a day's work, for fear of hurting or irritating their fellow-members. If a member is thought by the others to be lazy, they nag him and lecture him, and if he doesn't take to lectures they get him fired.

"These are tough people," Iverson said. "You have to be tough to make steel. Making steel is hard, dirty, dangerous, skilled work." In the early years, the teams were all male, but lately hot-metal women have begun to appear in the production teams, here and there.

During a factory startup, the production teams gradually take control of the factory. The teams themselves begin to decide who will stay with the team and who will be fired. Plenty of people are fired, or they hate the work and quit in frustration. Employees who don't like the pressure of a Nucor plant startup don't stay with Nucor. It is a Darwinian law of non-union steel: the rewards are money, the work is not all that safe, and the people who can't handle the job are many. "If there's one guy in a group who isn't doing well, the others in the group either train him or get rid of him," Iverson said. One time, some members of a team in a Nucor Vulcraft joist plant reportedly chased a guy around the plant with an angle iron.

THE Siegerland, in North Rhine–Westphalia, Germany, rises into ridges blanketed with fir trees, eighty miles southeast of the Rhine River and the city of Düsseldorf. In June, 1988, Keith Busse, the general manager of the Crawfordsville Project, arrived in the Siegerland with a few of his people, and me, to inspect the compact-strip-production machine and conclude some final negotiations with executives of SMS Schloemann-Siemag AG, the German company that had invented and fabricated Iverson's machine. SMS has its manufacturing plant in the town of Hilchenbach, near the center of the Siegerland. The plant is a warren of factory buildings that crowd upon Hilchenbach's main road. Forested mountain ridges stand all around the factory. On the day Busse and his people arrived, the mountains were cloaked in mist, and cows were grazing in fields nearby.



An SMS executive named Franz Küper escorted the Americans into the factory. Küper, a handsome, quiet man in his fifties, was SMS's project manager for the steel mill in Indiana. He was the Americans' handler, as it were. Küper led the Americans through a security gate, through a security door, past some security guards, into a linked complex of halls filled with German machinery. The machinery was of breathtaking size, and most of it was Nucor's C.S.P. machine, standing in pieces all over the floor. The C.S.P. was so massive and so complicated that it jammed the factory with machinery. The Americans picked their way through the machinery in a knot, trailed by German engineers.

The compact-strip-production machine had been built by hand, in the sense that only apprenticed master craftsmen, with years of training, knew how to operate the lathes and machine tools that cut and shaped its parts. SMS men in blue overalls, master craftsmen, stood on ladders propped against the mill stands, and they smiled at Keith Busse and his boys. "We are working twenty-four hours a day now," Franz Küper said.

"This is unbelievable," one of the Americans murmured.

Küper remarked, "I haven't been sleeping lately. It's not that I'm afraid the C.S.P. won't—er, work, but I always get this way before we ship a steel mill to a customer."

Küper led the Americans into a long hall. At the far end of the hall, a weird object glittered under floodlights. It was the SMS thin-slab-casting machine—*die Maschine*, the pride and hope of SMS, the material result of the idea that had struck Manfred Kolakowski. Soon it would be loaded onto a freighter bound for America.

The casting machine was thirty-two feet tall—three stories tall. It was painted gray-green. Ladders and scaffolding had been placed against it. On top was a box, which contained the Kolakowski mold. Below the box was a set of steel rolls, positioned like the rungs of two ladders placed against each other. As the steel solidified, it would be pulled down in a sheet from a slit in the bottom of the mold and on down between the rolls while being cooled with water sprays, and then the steel would be bent and withdrawn sideways by a withdrawal machine.

Busse climbed a ladder up the machine. His employees followed him, until the machine was festooned with Americans. They clustered on a scaffold at the top, peering down into the Kolakowski mold. The mold was made of copper, and formed a sort of mouth at the top of the casting machine. The mouth was a narrow, lens-shaped slit, four and a half feet long and seven inches wide at its widest point. Into these slightly parted lips liquid steel would be poured in vast quantities—a million tons a year if it went well. The inner lips gleamed with the color of copper. A network of bores was drilled through the copper to carry high-pressure cooling water; otherwise the copper would melt in a flash when liquid steel touched it.

"This is impressive," said Mark Millett, the melt-shop manager. He stretched out his arms and rubbed his hands together. "It makes you itchy to play with hot metal."

The Germans wanted to show the Americans how easy their machine was to take apart and repair, in the event of *ein Breakout*. The Americans climbed down from the scaffold and stood on the floor and watched the Germans disassemble the machine. A couple of engineers scrambled up ladders and removed steel pins from it. Then an overhead crane picked up the boxlike top of the machine and set it on the floor. Then the crane picked up two long segments of the machine and deposited them on the floor.

While this operation was taking place, a German engineer said to Busse, "When we install it for you in Crawfordsville, we will test it for you with liquid steel. We will get all the baby diseases out of it for you."

Busse did not reply.

The engineer went on, insistently, "You must have operators who have lost their fear of liquid steel."

"We think our people can do a good job with your caster," Busse replied.

"We must discuss with you the possibility of bringing in some experienced steel operators from Krupp to run the machine for you," the engineer said.

Busse shrugged and said nothing. He didn't want any Krupp steelworkers around Indiana.

There was an argument brewing between the Germans and the Americans. Because Iverson and Hans-Friedrich Marten had worked out the deal so quickly, many aspects of it remained unresolved, and had to be covered with riders, subsidiary contracts, oral agreements. It had begun to dawn on the Germans that the Nucor Corporation intended to hire inexperienced Indiana farmers to pour hot metal into the machine. The machine could blow up or melt down, and if it went up in a mushroom cloud because some idiot pushed the wrong button SMS would be humiliated before the world steel industry and would probably never be able to sell another C.S.P. machine to anyone. Billions of dollars of potential sales were at stake for SMS, and it all depended on American farmers, who knew nothing about steel, and, in the German opinion, had no business pouring hot metal into an experimental casting machine.

Of the Americans in Keith Busse's group, one the Germans watched closely was a reserved and dignified Nucor foreman named David C. Thompson —Big Dave Thompson. Thompson had a broad neck, close-cropped ash-blond hair, and calm, serious blue eyes, behind glasses, which gave him an intellectual look. He was thirty-three years old—five years older than Mark Millett, who was his boss. Millett had recently hired Thompson from Rouge Steel, a Big Steel company in Dearborn, Michigan. Millett had given Thompson primary responsibility for the first attempts to cast steel. Thompson was the machine's helmsman, the pilot. That was why the Germans were watching him. He was six feet four inches tall and he appeared to be several feet wide, but he wasn't fat; he had the marbling of the hot-metal man, although the intellectual appearance of his spectacles seemed to contradict the power of his frame.

Thompson began to poke around the segments of the SMS casting machine with his hands. He inserted a tape measure in the machinery and began to measure the clearances between moving parts.

"I want to learn as much about this machine as I can," he said over his shoulder to a German engineer who hovered behind him. "I want to put my hands on it." Thompson called for assistance, and two more German engineers hurried over, to answer his questions.

"Is this a heat shield?" Thompson asked, pointing to a piece of metal.

"*Ja, ja*, of course."

"Good," Thompson said. He wrapped his hand around a nozzle that would spray water on the steel. "I like the way these nozzles can be changed," he said.

"*Ja*, that's right," one German engineer said.

"I like that, that's a good system," said Thompson. "What kind of spray-water strainers do you have in there?" He reached a hand into the machinery. "It's hard to get at this strainer. I'd like to see something that's quick and easy to pop out. I may not be an engineer, but I have experience around these machines."

A German engineer took me aside. "These Americans, they are so young," he said, in a low voice. "They look like marines. What is the word—*Ledernacken*?"

"Leathernecks," I said.

"Maybe I have the feeling of the Americans to be a bit—what is the word?" The engineer touched his forehead, as if trying to pluck an English word from it. " 'Pioneers' is the word," he said. "They are pioneers. You know what I mean? You must look at them. You see? You see these guys with their wagons and their pistols, going to the Wild West." He sighed. "Sometimes I fear the transportation to the U.S.," he said. "We once sent half a steel mill to Australia, and the ship sank."

I burst out laughing.

He looked horrified. "I am not choking," he said. "The ship sank. This was a disaster for us."

IN a conference room in the SMS Hilchenbach factory, Keith Busse and his boys sit at a wide table opposite the Germans, for a negotiation. The Americans wear creamy blended suits, with the sort of jacket that rides up off the shirt collar, and the Germans wear dark, sleek tropical-wool suits. In the center of the table, the Stars and Stripes flies beside the black-red-and-gold flag of the Federal Republic of Germany, and the flags are flanked by bottles of Cappy soda water, to enable the steelmen to cool their throats in case of shouting.

Franz Küper is reading from a piece of paper: "It is necessary to have tight contact between SMS and Crawfordsville. We recommend a larger number of trained SMS personnel assisting Nucor at the Nucor startup. . . . It means more safety . . . and the shortest period of function testing.”

Mark Millett runs a hand through his hair. “It will be *our* operators starting up the caster,” Millett says. “It will be *our* people doing the startup, as we've said before.”

Big Dave Thompson, the pilot, folds his arms and nods.

Franz Küper listens politely but does not reply.

Keith Busse joins the discussion. “This has been a controversial subject since the beginning, Franz,” he says. “Certainly we've never started up one of your casting machines before. And you have. But we are an unusual company. Sometimes when we choose to do things our way, it bites us in the fanny. But it's what sets Nucor apart.”

The German side of the table is not pleased by Busse's remark.

Busse continues, “We've never resolved this question of how many SMS people are going to be present at the startup in Crawfordsville, and it could haunt us to the end of the project.”

“We certainly agree,” Franz Küper says.

Another German adds, “If we don't have enough of our people at Crawfordsville, this could jeopardize the guarantees we are offering—”

“I object to the reference that this will jeopardize the guarantees!” Busse says, raising his voice.

The leathernecks nod. Someone passes a pack of Wrigley's Doublemint gum around the American side of the table. Both sides mutter for a while, until it becomes clear that there will be no agreement over the question of how many SMS bodies will be allowed to participate in the startup of the compact-strip-production machine.

Franz Küper says, “Keith will have to take this back to the—er, States and present it to the Nucor Corporation.”

“Let's get on to the hot-strip mill,” Busse says, referring to the lower half of the C.S.P.—the part containing the rolling machines, which will be housed in the hot-mill building, under the control of a man named Rodney Mott, the manager of the hot mill.

“We would like to emphasize that we would like to have *two* SMS engineers in the hot-strip mill, but we are allowed only *one* engineer by Nucor,” an SMS executive says.

“One man, two men—we're pretty close on the numbers,” Keith Busse says, breezily.

The Germans' irritation seems to grow. Franz Küper consults a piece of paper, and says, “We have itemized some other questions of a similar nature here—”

“Now, Franz!” Busse interrupts. “That's just opening an old wound! Now, there again, Nucor's got to *pay* these SMS salaries. We're not getting your people for free. Why don't you pay these SMS salaries yourself? We're paying you to build us a machine. Then do we have to pay you to make sure it runs right? Time and again, I kept hearing from you, ‘You don't have to pay for this, you don't have to pay for this—’ ”

Franz Küper smiles, and says, “You never heard that from us.”

The German side of the table bursts into laughter.

The Americans are not amused.

“Wait a minute, Franz,” Busse says. “It's almost like you're assuming Nucor is stupid.”

The Germans choose not to reply. There is a clink and a swish as someone pours Cappy soda water into a glass.

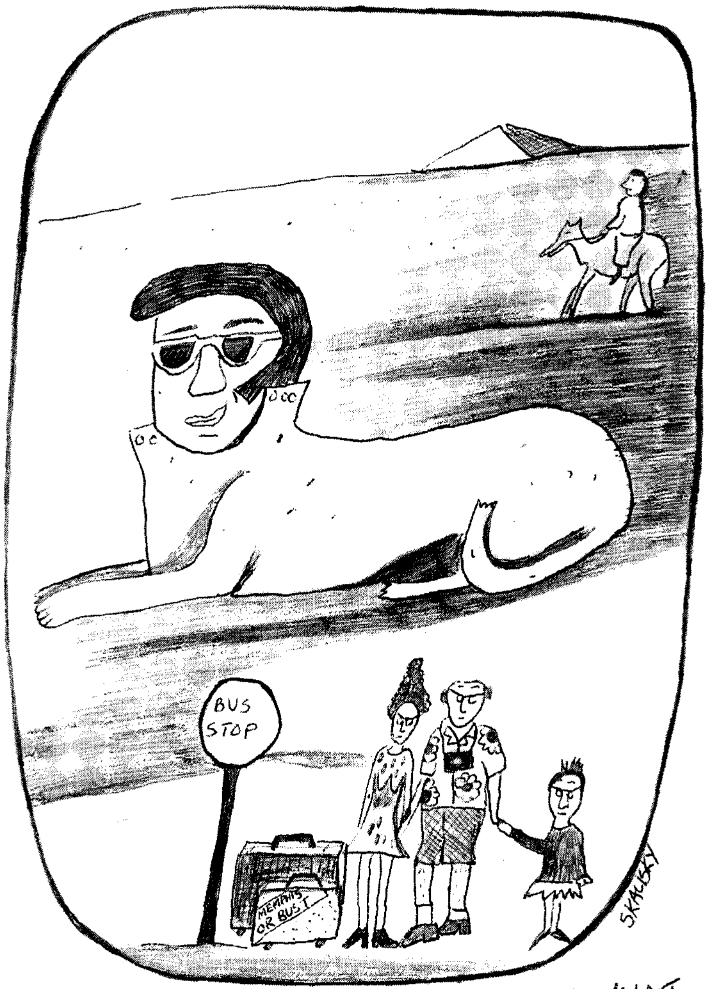
“We aren't going to shoot ourselves in the foot,” Busse goes on.

“We want you to get a quality strip of steel, Keith,” Küper replies, softly.

“Well, that's why we have all these *Nucor* metallurgists,” Busse says. “And all these *Nucor* maintenance people. And all these *Nucor* electrical engineers.”

Rodney Mott, the manager of the hot mill, gazes at the German side of the table with a neutral, unreadable expression on his face. Mott is a soft-spoken manufacturing wizard in his mid-thirties, stocky, dark-haired, with rather cool eyes, wearing steel-rimmed glasses. He has had fourteen years' experience at U.S. Steel running rolling machines that shape pieces of steel. What Mott wants is no Germans bothering him in his mill. “I'd go a step further,” he says. “There are people at Nucor who are coming out of the American steel industry who know this stuff as well as you do in Germany.”

The Germans are trying to size Mott up; he's quiet, and he's hard to read. The Germans are not convinced that Mott is a manufacturing wizard. They do not think that the American steel industry is blessed with talent, considering the obvious



MEMPHIS WAS DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE VICKER FAMILY EXPECTED.

fact that the American steel industry recently almost dropped dead. “We are training someone now to help you start the hot mill,” Franz Küper says, insistently.

Busse cries, “Who are you training, Franz? Superman?”

“He is somebody to represent our interests!”

“Well, if Superman is going to represent *your* interests,” Busse says, “are you then going to *pay* for him?”

Everyone laughs. Even Küper takes the remark in good humor.

Now Busse says firmly, “Are your people going to work *two* shifts a day? We’re working sixteen hours a day out there in Indiana to build this mill. We’re running two shifts a day. Are your people going to run two shifts right alongside us? There’s no such thing as a forty-hour workweek at Nucor.”

The discussion turns to the subject of daily rates for SMS advisers. “We can put your people up for twenty-five bucks a day in our famous Crawfordsville motel, the General Lew Wallace,” Busse says. “The General Lew is a nice motel. It has a bar. Your people will like it. Maybe you should reduce the rate you are charging. Eight hundred dollars a day seems excessive. If you charged less for your time, that would be a way of getting more of your people to Crawfordsville.”

The German executives ponder Busse’s idea for a moment or so. No way. The Germans want their engineers to be paid liberally and by the day, and they want as many SMS engineers as possible at Crawfordsville, to prevent Indiana locals from immolating their beautiful machine in a hecatomb of boiling metal before the eyes of the world steel industry. Franz Küper knocks a stack of papers on the table to align them and says, “Shall we—er, go on to point two, then?”

THE negotiation ended in a bowling alley. Bowling alleys in Germany serve food and hard liquor. The final point of the negotiation was to determine which nationality could drink the greatest amount of liquor—the final and most important point of all negotiations among steelmen. The bowling alley in Hilchenbach is a converted railway station. A little train still makes a whistle stop there twice a day. There are several alleys inside the building, separated by movable partitions. The partitions form private dining rooms, and the rooms look out on the alleys. The Germans had rented a private dining room for the affair. They sat at one table, along with Keith Busse, and the rest of the Nucor people sat at another table. Waitresses carried in bowls of brown, spicy oxtail soup, setting them down on the tables over the sounds of bowling pins being knocked down. Round after round of beer arrived, and plates of schnitzel.

Franz Küper stood up at the German table. “Your attention, please,” he said. “In this first game, we’ll be playing for the lowest number. The object is to knock down as few pins as possible. But you can’t roll the ball into the gutter.”

The Americans and the Germans formed national teams, and the Germans destroyed the Americans at low-ball bowling.

“At least, we made second place,” one of the Nucor men said.

“You have lost,” a German engineer by the name of Dieter Richstein declared loudly. “Now you must pay us *one bottle of whiskey extra per month* per engineer. That will be in our contract.”

Busse said in a low voice to the Americans, “How do we even this up in ten minutes?”

Another round of beer arrived.

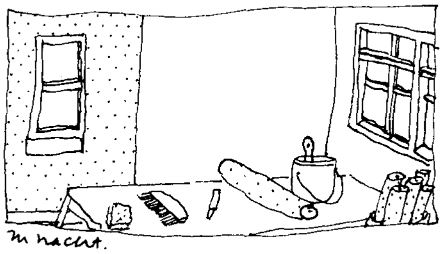
“For this next game,” Franz Küper said, “the idea is to hit the numbered pins in sequence, everybody.”

The Americans couldn’t hit anything in sequence except the gutters, and they lost the game dramatically.

“Now, for the next game, the even-numbered pins count single and the odd-numbered pins count double,” Küper said. “It’s—er, more complicated.”

It certainly was, especially after another round of beer had gone down. The Germans diplomatically suggested mixed German-American teams.

Dieter Richstein raised his beer glass for a toast. “I have an announcement to make,” he said, getting to his feet. “My first impression—my first impression of our working relationship with these American steelmakers is that—is that—*they are strong drinkers*.”



Richstein was a small man, an expert on rolling mills, with a beak nose and hair going white. He called for a round of something new, and a collection of little glasses appeared, containing *Hilchenbach Korn*, a raw white liquor fresh out of a local pot still. It made our palates burst into flames like oil-soaked rags. Richstein studied our faces with the intensity of a forensic pathologist. He leaned across the table and gave us a lecture on our responsibilities as Americans. “Before the war, all the new ideas for steel plants came from the United States,” he said. “After the war, there has been nothing from you. Nothing! Now all the papers on steel are written by Europeans and Japanese. So what has happened to you?” Richstein shrugged and gave us a look full of meaning, as if to say that the American failure in steel was one of those ugly secrets best not examined too closely by America’s friends. “So now it is time for America to be saved by Americans,” he said.

THE next morning, we were supposed to watch Manfred Kolakowski give *eine praktische Demonstration* of the art of casting steel into a thin slab. The Americans drove in a tight string of cars at high speed through the town of Kreuztal and turned left into the village of Buschhütten (“Foundry in the Woods”) and down a boulevard shaded with beautiful old plane trees, and suddenly they arrived at a cobbled parking lot beside a collection of old, gray buildings, under a gray sky. This was the foundry where Manfred Kolakowski had now been pouring hot metal into the pilot casting machine for two years, with variable results. Swallows circulated in the air around the building. The Americans went into a conference room to wait for Kolakowski to appear. The floor of the conference room rumbled.

“Listen, you can hear it,” Keith Busse said.

Kolakowski was melting steel.

The Americans drank coffee and spoke in thick voices:

“This is it, the making of steel.”

“When I woke up this morning, my head was bigger than a blue-ribbon hog.”

Manfred Kolakowski entered the room and shook hands all around. Ko-

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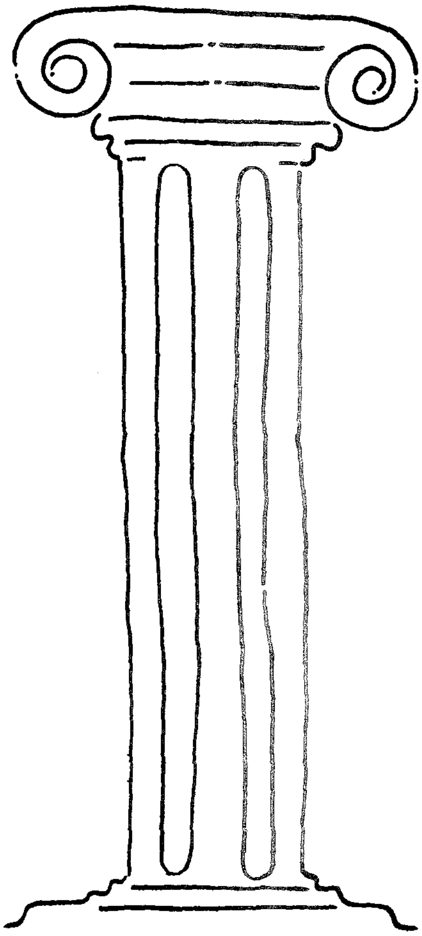

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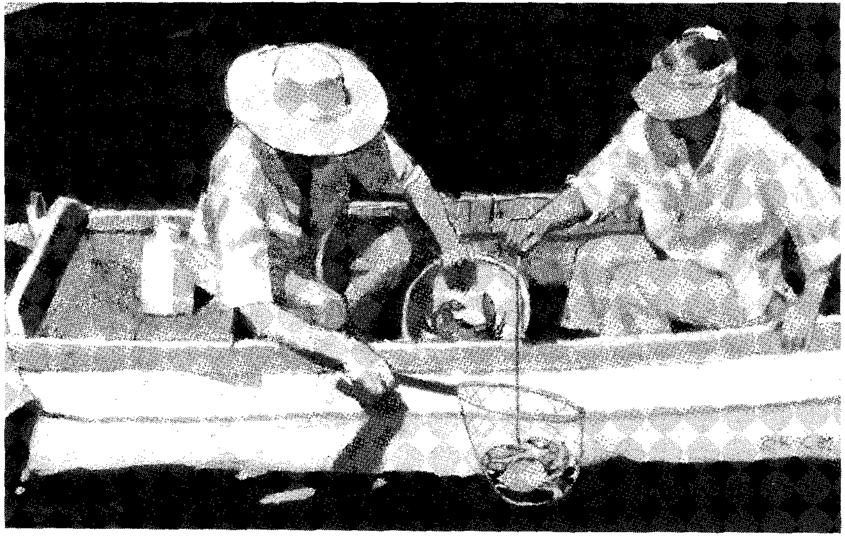

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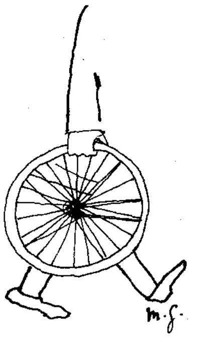
lakowski's title at SMS was Senior Group Leader for Product Development. The inventor was in his late forties. He had a long, severe face, with a high, prominent forehead; he had bags under his eyes, and a heavy jaw. He fixed his gaze on the Americans and asked, "How is it going, your work in Crawfordsville?"

"How's everything going here?" Mark Millett asked Kolakowski.

"Oh, *ja*, not so bad," Kolakowski said. "Today, there is a little bit of nickel in the steel. Sometimes it works, sometimes not. You want to make progress, so you try different things."



"How many breakouts have you had so far?" asked Keith Busse.

"I think about forty breakouts in total, out of four hundred casts," said Kolakowski, who spoke fluent English. He led us across the cobbled parking lot to the main foundry building. Inside the foundry, in a relatively small space, stood a small casting tower, only two stories tall. Kolakowski's plaything, the pilot casting machine, was concealed inside the casting tower. A roar and a flicker of blue light coming around a corner in the foundry announced the presence of a small electric-arc furnace, which at the moment was finishing a heat of steel—making a bath of liquid steel.

Kolakowski and the Americans put on aluminized suits called silvers, designed to protect them from splashes of hot metal. They put on silver coats, silver gloves, and silver booties, and they put on hard hats with clear face shields. Suited up like astronauts, they enjoyed a slight protection from a splash of molten steel. But steel splashes may be tremendous and may be accompanied by phenomena that a silver suit may not provide any protection against, such as high-voltage electrical fires, superheated-steam explosions, flesh-cutting sprays of hydraulic fluid, concrete explosions (because of its moisture content, concrete can explode if liquid steel is dumped on it), and chunks of machinery the size of engine blocks pinwheeling through the walls of a plant. The casting temperature of liquid steel is 2850 degrees Fahrenheit, about one-quarter of the surface temperature of the sun. Kolakowski spoke of the difficulty of controlling the experimental machine when there was liquid metal inside it. "All decisions have to be made in seconds," he said.

The top of the machine was surmounted by a platform with a railing around it. This was the casting deck. The casting deck sat across the top of the casting tower like the bridge of a ship. The deck was made of concrete, and it had escape stairways at three corners, in case the ship had to be abandoned. The center of the deck was cut by a scorched and blackened slit. This was the mouth of the Kolakowski mold, the copper funnel. The rest of the machine extended below the casting deck, beneath the feet of the steelworkers. The casting deck is the most dangerous place in a steel mill, because you are standing on top of a large machine and below a ladle—a giant bucket—that is pouring a river of steel into the machine.

A sort of bathtub, called a tundish, squatted on legs on the casting deck, above the slit. The tundish was an intermediate holding tank for liquid steel. Steel drained in two stages into the machine. First, it dropped from a hole in the bottom of the ladle into the bathtub. When the bathtub was filled up, then, in the second stage, it drained from the bathtub into the machine. A white ceramic nozzle extended downward from the belly of the bathtub and deep between the lips of the Kolakowski mold. The nozzle fed hot metal into the mold. The mold was red on the inside and was clearly female in structure. The nozzle was creamy white, and it was long, slender, fragile, and obviously male, and it fitted neatly into the Kolakowski mold.

As liquid steel flowed through the nozzle into the machine, the mold would start to move up and down, faster and faster, as the cast was accelerated and steel moved through the machine. "Many jokes can be made about this," Kolakowski said. The oscillation prevents liquid steel from sticking to the inner faces of the mold.

A bright glow appeared beside the casting deck as a crane brought over a ladle of live steel, restless liquid metal, horripilating with dissolved oxygen: a heat of steel. Kolakowski lowered his face shield and began to give orders in German to his men, and the casting deck rumbled: high-pressure water pumps had begun to circulate coolant water through the bore holes in the Kolakowski mold.

The ladle had the shape of a Dixie cup. A white blanket of limestone slag floated on the steel, like a head on a beer. Occasionally, the blanket cracked, and through the cracks an orange-white light burst and played across the ceiling of the foundry, bathing our bodies in warmth. You could not look directly at the naked metal without pain in the eyes. A hissing, crackling cough came from the ladle. It sounded like frozen chicken parts being dropped into an institutional deep-fat fryer, but a timbre of iron reverberated deep in the ladle, the unsatisfied mutter of live steel, wanting to go into a carbon boil. The sound of the metal did not inspire confidence in the gadgets of inventors.

German steelworkers, standing on a platform, shovelled silicon sand into the ladle, to "kill" the steel. The sand removed the dissolved oxygen from the metal. Liquid steel that contains dissolved oxygen is live steel. Live steel can foam out of a ladle, burning people to death. Live steel cannot be poured into a casting machine, because it will foam inside the machine. Only killed steel can be poured into a machine.

The Americans, in their silvers, stood to one side on the deck and lowered their face shields. Big Dave Thompson stood comfortably at ease, watching the hot metal with a calm gaze through his spectacles, and the light of the metal shimmered on his clear face shield. No one had offered me silvers to wear, but I asked Franz Küper if I could stay on the casting deck with the Nucor steelworkers when the cast was performed.

He shook his head. "These Nucor guys know liquid steel, and you don't," he said. "If there's an emergency up here, they know what to do. We do have emergencies."

Küper led me off the casting deck, to where Keith Busse stood by a railing. None of us were hot-metal men, and so we had to watch the play from a safe distance.

The crane picked up the ladle and moved it over the casting deck. The ladle hovered over the bathtub, above the mouth of the machine. There was a small black pipe sticking out of the circular bottom of the ladle. That was the hole from which steel would pour into the bathtub. A German steelworker fitted a sleeve over the black pipe, and someone shouted an order. A flash of light appeared at the end of the pipe, and a stream of steel ran through the sleeve into the bathtub, the tundish, with a roaring sound and a burst of sparks.

"Now the tundish is filling with steel," Küper explained.

Kolakowski, pressing buttons on a control panel, opened a stopper in the bathtub. That allowed steel to drain down into the mold, through the nozzle. There was another burst of sparks.

"Now the mold is filling," Küper said.

There was a pause. A gout of sparks flew into the air over the casting deck and showered among the steelworkers.

"Now the cast has begun," Küper said.

A thin red slab of steel began to emerge like a tongue from the base of the machine.

Suddenly, flames shot up from the casting deck. A cauliflower of smoke boiled to the roof of the foundry. German steelworkers began to run in all directions across the deck, shouting in German. The machine appeared to have caught fire.

"I think it is an emergency," Küper said, in a flat voice.

A volcanic eruption started from the mouth of the machine. Smoke began to pour from the sides of the machine.

"Something's *fucked*," Busse said.

A siren went off. The crane suddenly lifted the ladle up and away from the casting deck, while a few shining droplets of steel drizzled from the pipe at the bottom of the ladle. This is known as an abort procedure.

The Americans gathered near the exit stairs, getting ready to run. A bitter smell hung in the air as the steel inside the machine caught fire and burned. The nozzle had somehow snapped off and fallen down inside the machine. That had triggered a breakout, a rain of hot metal down through the machine.

"They've aborted the cast," Busse said. "It's all shot to pieces."

That made it forty-one breakouts for Manfred Kolakowski. A siren went *whoop, whoop, whoop!*—laughing at his attempt to satisfy the hope of Sir Henry Bessemer, who first dreamed of such a machine during the reign of Queen Victoria. —RICHARD PRESTON

(This is the first part of a two-part article.)

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AMERICAN CHRONICLES

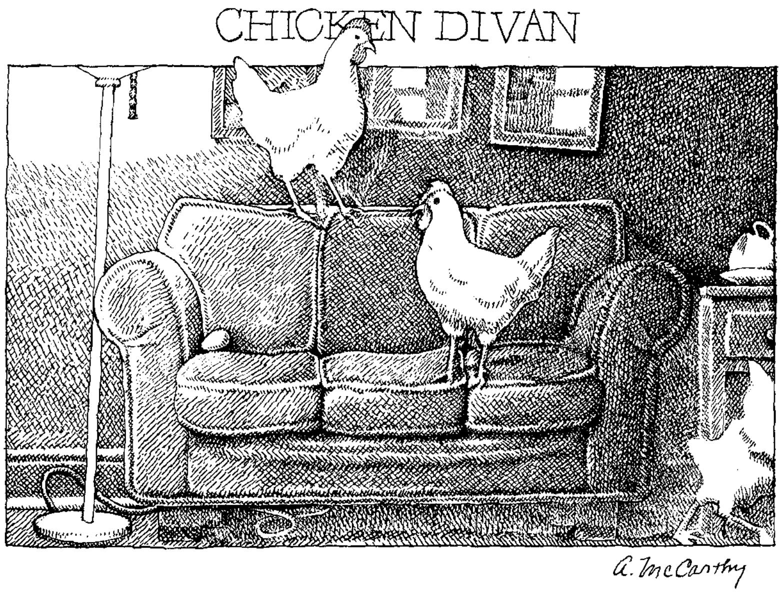
YOU DON'T ASK, YOU DON'T GET

THEY started out as the Ermines. It sounded fancy. There were four of them in the group, all students at Stitt Junior High School, in the Washington Heights section of upper Manhattan. The group, like the neighborhood, was mixed—part black, part Puerto Rican. It came into existence when Herman Santiago and Joe Negroni, who had been singing together, merged with Sherman Garnes and Jimmy Merchant. This was in 1955. The Ermines sang on the street, the way kids from such neighborhoods later did break dancing on the street—but not for money. "It was a fad at the time to be a vocal group," Jimmy Merchant said many years afterward. "It wasn't just like roller-skating. It was a higher-class fad—a quality fad. It tied in to being known, and getting girls." Apparently, Merchant and Sherman Garnes didn't consider the Ermines a quality name, so the Ermines became the Coupe de Villes. Car names were popular then. There were at least two other groups named after Cadillacs. For a while, the Coupe de Villes had a fifth member—five was the standard number for street-corner-harmony groups—but apparently he was never able to overcome the bedrock disadvantage of having no talent for singing. Or maybe he found some other way to get girls. Such details in the early history of the group tend to be hazy. Why would junior-high-school kids who sing together think that their after-school activities were worth remembering with great precision?

Everyone agrees, though, that the geographical center of the group was West 165th Street, between Edgecombe Avenue and Amsterdam Avenue. Stitt Junior High School was there. Sherman Garnes and Herman Santiago lived on the block. So did another Stitt student, named Frankie Lymon. He was a couple of years younger and a lot smaller than the four Coupe de Villes, but in some ways he seemed more mature—someone Jimmy Merchant thought of as "this midget who was a man." Although Frankie was not yet thirteen, he sometimes worked as a clerk in a convenience store called the Excel-O Mart, on the corner of 165th and Amsterdam. He had sung publicly, not just in Stitt talent shows but with his father's gospel group, the Harlemaires. He was, in the words of Herman Santiago, "extremely talented and bright and very cocky." According to one version of how Frankie joined the group, he happened to be hanging around a 165th Street stoop one day when Herman Santiago was having trouble hitting the high notes as the lead singer in one of the first original songs the group had come up with—"I Want You to Be My Girl." There are other versions, all having to do with a voice that had no trouble with the high notes. Frankie had a sort of gospel tenor—a high, strong voice of remarkable clarity. Particularly in conjunction with Sherman Garnes' bass—an unusually low bass for a fifteen-year-old—it helped give the Coupe de Villes a sound of their own. Except that sooner or later the Coupe de Villes were no longer the Coupe de Villes. They had become the Premiers.

One of the tenants of the building that held the Excel-O Mart was a young man from Philadelphia named Richard Barrett, who sang with a group called the Valentines. Barrett had some prestige on West 165th Street: the Valentines sang indoors. They were singing then at the Apollo Theatre, on 125th Street, in fact, and they had done pretty well with a record called "Lily Maebelle." According to Barrett, he met the Coupe de Villes because they used to sing "Lily Maebelle" outside his window—they presumably knew that he was beginning to work part-time as an A. & R. man for a record company downtown—and he finally told them that if they'd quit bothering him when he was trying to sleep he'd come over to their rehearsal at Stitt to hear what they could do. There are other versions of that one, too. None of them contest the basic fact that Richard Barrett, impressed by what he heard, took the group downtown and presented it to George Goldner, the record-company proprietor who had put out "Lily Maebelle."

Downtown meant white. It didn't mean RCA Victor. In the mid-fifties, respectable, mainstream pop music—the kind heard on records put out by Victor and Capitol and Decca—was dominated by crooners. There were a few black recording artists, of course, but the customary response of pop-music producers to an appealing song they heard sung on a black rhythm-and-blues label was to "cover" it—re-record it with a white star. The attitude of the pop-music industry toward rock ranged from such quiet absorption to outright hostility. In their book "Rock 'n' Roll Is Here to Pay," Steve Chapple and Reebee Garofalo quote from some testimony before a congressional committee in 1958 saying that rock was "the most brutal, ugly, desperate, vicious form of expression it has been my misfortune to hear," that it was written and sung "for the most part by cretinous goons," and that "by means of its almost imbecilic reiterations and sly—lewd—in plain


CHICKEN DIVAN

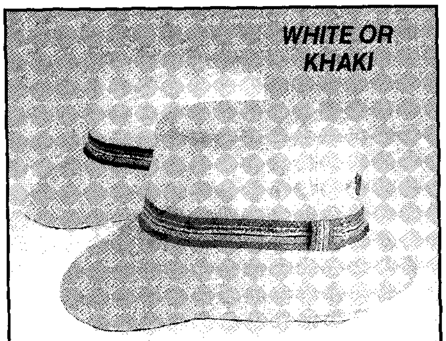
fact dirty—lyrics . . . [it] manages to be the martial music of every sideburned delinquent on the face of the earth.” The concerned citizen who so testified was Frank Sinatra.

The producers who actually put out rhythm-and-blues records were on the fringes of the industry—hustling independents who were sometimes imaginative in their judgments and almost always creative in their bookkeeping. George Goldner had moved into rhythm and blues from Latin, another fringe. He was known in the business as a good promoter and a bad horseplayer. “I think in my heart if he hadn't gambled he wouldn't have shorted anybody,” Richard Barrett said recently. “But everybody shorts somebody.” When it came to handling money that somehow didn't find its way to the black teen-agers who were often both the performers and the writers of rhythm-and-blues songs, the difference between George Goldner and the other entrepreneurs of early rock might have been that the others didn't have horseplaying as an excuse. The Premiers, on their first business trip downtown, were wowed by George Goldner. Thirty-five years later, Jimmy Merchant still had a picture in his mind of what Goldner was wearing: “He had an embroidered shirt, long pointed shoes, and black silk socks. You could see through the socks, they were so silky. He had on a mohair suit.”

Goldner agreed to record a 45 by the Premiers, apparently squeezing the session into the dinner break of a recording session with a group called the Millionaires. Herman Santiago was still doing most of the lead singing then; the novelty of singing R. & B. songs in a Hispanic accent had been part of the group's appeal to Barrett. But, for one reason or another—maybe because Santiago had a cold that day, maybe because of Goldner's preference—it was Frankie Lymon who was the lead singer of the Premiers at the recording session. Except they were no longer the Premiers. When the record came out, in late 1955, the group was called the Teenagers, the lead singer was Frankie Lymon, and the song was one of their own, developed on West 165th Street—“Why Do Fools Fall in Love?” It was an instant, stupendous hit.

“Why Do Fools Fall in Love?” went to No. 6 on the charts—not the rhythm-and-blues charts, the pop charts. Under their final name—Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers—the group broke through to become a phenomenally successful crossover act. They didn't play the Apollo; they played “The Ed Sullivan Show.” (In Sullivan's teaser announcements through the program about what was still to come, he continually referred to Frankie as Frankie Robinson.) The Teenagers were not considered threatening to whites—probably because of Frankie, who came across as the sassy, pint-size kid brother who would never grow up. Bouncing around in front of the group, Frankie managed to ask all the questions—why do fools fall in love? why do birds sing so gay?—and never quit smiling. The Teenagers came in a squeaky-clean package—processed hair and the sort of clothes familiar from Hollywood campus movies of the forties, including letter sweaters. At one point, Frankie led them in a syrupy appeal to parents called “I'm Not a Juvenile Delinquent.” Although they never came up with a song to equal the blockbuster “Why Do Fools Fall in Love?,” they had three or four more hits. And they were stars. For thousands of other kids singing what some people called street-corner harmony and other people were beginning to call doo-wop, the Teenagers were the model—the proof that a miracle could happen. In a way, the Teenagers were rock stars before the era of the rock star—before it was even clear how rock stars were expected to behave. Jimmy Merchant has said, “We were the first people to get out of long limousines with sneakers and jeans on.”

Stardom lasted almost exactly eighteen months. After a tour of Great Britain, Frankie split off to do a single act, and the four remaining Teenagers got themselves another lead singer. Frankie couldn't repeat his hits, and neither could the Teenagers. Frankie had some other problems. His voice was changing—a change that would leave him sounding like a perfectly adequate but unremarkable crooner. Even worse than that, he was a junkie. He did club appearances as a solo for a while, but as his drug problem worsened he had more and more trouble booking jobs. Jerry Blavat, a disk jockey who has always specialized in the songs of the



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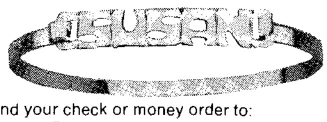

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fifties and sixties, gave him an occasional hundred and fifty dollars or so to appear at one of the record hops Blavat held in Philadelphia—events at which the guest star had only to lip-synch to his record. Before Blavat became a d.j., he had been the road manager for Danny and the Juniors, and he remembered Lymon from those days as a mischievous kid, whose idea of backstage entertainment was to hide Paul Anka's shoes just before Anka had to be onstage. It was a different Frankie Lymon who lip-synched in the middle sixties. He was beginning to look puffy. He was missing a couple of teeth. He had started borrowing from people in the business. Sooner or later, he was panhandling or stealing. He was arrested at least once for possession, and once for stealing a set of drums. Occasionally, he'd be hospitalized for a cure. More than once, he announced his reformation with some fanfare. On one of those occasions, in January of 1967, a piece in *Ebony* quoted him as confessing, among other things, that he had been a juvenile delinquent after all—someone who smoked a lot of marijuana in grade school, and was pimping for local girls before he was twelve, and had what amounted to a stable of older women during those eighteen months when he was cast as a cute little cutup.

Around the time of the *Ebony* piece, Lymon went into the Army, apparently as an alternative to going to jail. At Fort Gordon, outside Augusta, Georgia, he seemed to be in better shape than he had been in for some years. He was hardly a model soldier. He was never finicky about staying on the base when he was supposed to be on duty, for instance, and he eventually ended up with a less than honorable discharge. In Augusta, though, the scrapes he got into seemed less serious—drinking bouts instead of heroin addiction, for instance, and arrests for driving without a license rather than for theft. His lawyer, Maxwell T. Cohen, was moved to write Lymon that those who cared about him "rejoice in the fact that the sun is beginning to shine for you." In Augusta, Frankie married a respectable woman—an elementary-school teacher named Emira Eagle. After his discharge, they lived with her mother, but they discussed building a house of their own. For a while, Frankie appeared on weekends at the Capri Lounge in the local Howard Johnson Motor Lodge. His wife, having caught on to how Frankie dealt with ready cash, went to the Capri Lounge herself to pick up his paychecks. Emira Lymon was hoping that Frankie would be able to use Augusta as a base—another bar, called Trudy & Bill's, had expressed some interest in booking him—and take short road trips while she remained at her teaching job. Then, in February of 1968, he apparently got an encouraging call from his new manager about a weekend job in New York. He left in the middle of the week, planning to stay at his grandmother's—the apartment he had grown up in on 165th Street. A couple of days later, Emira Lymon got a call from New York. Frankie had been found dead in the bathroom of his grandmother's apartment. The death certificate said "acute intravenous narcotism"—an overdose.

Frankie Lymon was twenty-five years old when he died, and he had been a has-been for more than ten years. The other Teenagers didn't fare a lot better than Frankie. Some of them had problems with drugs or alcohol. In another ten years, Joe Negroni and Sherman Garnes were also dead. Jimmy Merchant was driving a cab. Ordinarily, that might have been that. Among rock-history buffs, the Teenagers would have been remembered mainly as an early example of a successful crossover group, and Frankie Lymon would have been remembered mainly as an early example of a rock singer destroying himself with drugs. What kept Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers from being confined to those footnotes of rock history was one monumental hit song—"Why Do Fools Fall in Love?"

A pop song was once thought of as the paradigm of a creation that is on everyone's lips for a few moments and is then forgotten forever. As it turned out, though, nostalgia for the early days of rock became almost a spinoff industry in itself. "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" became what is sometimes referred to as a rock classic—a staple of oldies albums and rock-trivia quizzes. In 1973, it was featured on the soundtrack of the film "American Graffiti"—a film that had a lot to do with the demand for oldies. In 1981, Diana Ross did a recording of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" that went nearly to the top of the charts. It was clear by then that the songwriter royalties for "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" would represent a serious income for the foreseeable future. As it happened, though, precisely who wrote "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" was one detail in the early history of the Teenagers that was particularly hazy.

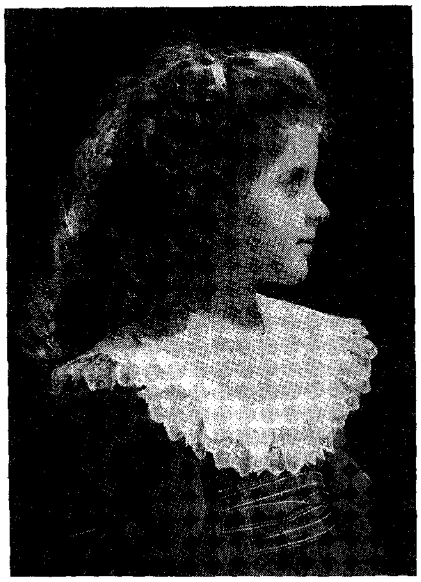
THERE was a time in American popular music when a song reached the public almost entirely through sheet music. The song's publisher produced and distributed and promoted the sheet music—more or less the way a book publisher produces and distributes and promotes a book—and for that received fifty per cent of the royalties. Now that a song reaches the public mainly through records or tapes or videos, the publisher's role has been reduced to registering the copyright for the song with the Library of Congress and dealing with the royalties from soundtracks and re-recordings. (Royalties from radio stations and night clubs and jukebox operators are collected by one of the monitoring organizations, ASCAP or BMI, and sent in separate checks to the writer and the publisher.) One thing that hasn't changed is the percentage of the take: the publisher still normally gets fifty per cent of the royalties. "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" was published by one of George Goldner's companies—another one of his companies, Gee, put out the record—and the writers of the song listed on the copyright that Goldner registered with the Library of Congress were Frank Lymon and George Goldner.

Like many of the early rock entrepreneurs, George Goldner may have grown up on the street himself, but not West 165th Street. How could he have been one of the writers of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" Richard Barrett says, "He might have tried to change a word or two here and there." Then again, he might not have. Although listing someone's name as a writer of a song legally means that he literally participated in writing the song, it was common practice in the fifties for an R. & B. record producer to tell a group that he'd have to have a writing credit if it wanted its song recorded—or to put his name on the copyright application without telling the group anything. "We had no idea of the value of a song then," Barrett has said. "We had no idea what the value of a copyright was. And they weren't going to tell any black people about that anyway." So George Goldner had half of the royalties as the publisher and half of the remaining half as a co-writer. In the late fifties—after "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" finished its first run on the charts but before the onset of the oldies craze—Goldner may not have had much of an idea of the future value of the song himself. As it turned out, though, the future value would not be his. Because of his gambling habit, Goldner was losing control of his business. First, he had a partner in the group of companies that included the companies that had published and recorded "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" Then the partner took over, and Goldner was completely out of the picture. The partner was a man named Morris Levy.

Morris Levy was a seventh-grade dropout from the Bronx who eventually became one of the most powerful figures in the record industry. He started his career in the entertainment business as a night-club checkroom boy, and went from there to a job developing night-club pictures and from there to operating hat-check and darkroom concessions. Then he ran some night clubs, including Birdland, in New York, and promoted concerts—all of which led to the record business. Through it all, he was a friend, and occasionally a business partner, of mobsters; he was also the Man of the Year at United Jewish Appeal dinners, and a planter of forests of trees in Israel, and a man deferred to by ostensibly more respectable record executives, and a financial supporter of the congressional black caucus. The walls of his office, on Broadway, were adorned not only with gold records but also with an array of plaques from institutions he had supported and with a photograph of him with Cardinal Spellman, of New York, and, as it later turned out, with a listening device planted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He spoke in a raspy voice, often using the sort of grammar and the sort of language that would not have inspired that final educator in the seventh grade to promote him to the eighth grade. A lot of people in the business were afraid of Morris Levy. There were people who said that he was, whatever his faults, a standup guy—an implacable opponent, who demanded three eyes for an eye, but a loyal friend, who would look after the financial needs of a pal's widow even if she was in fact pretty well off. There were other people who said that he was a vicious, conniving, thoroughly dishonest thug. Nobody claimed that he was easy to do business with.

Levy was one of the people Lymon pestered for money in the sixties. In 1965, when Lymon was arrested in California and was desperate for cash, Levy bought his rights to "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" for a sum that was probably something like fifteen hundred dollars. Apparently, Levy simply told BMI to start sending Lymon's share to him, and BMI complied. A year before Lymon signed over his rights, Goldner had written a remarkable letter to the Registrar of Copyrights at the Library of Congress, saying, "This is to acknowledge that the attached schedule of compositions which contain my name as writer should properly have the name of Morris Levy in my place." The schedule listed "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" and forty-nine other songs, including even a couple of Latin tunes, like "Algún Día" and "Big City Merengue." When Diana Ross did her hit recording, the record label said "Words and music by Frankie Lymon and Morris Levy." Levy, as the publisher and the co-writer and the owner of Lymon's rights, got a hundred per cent of the royalties. He got a hundred per cent of the "American Graffiti" royalties. When the American Greetings Corporation made a commercial featuring "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?," a hundred per cent of the royalties went to Morris Levy.

THE copyright law of the United States was thoroughly revised in 1978. The old law, which remains in force for anything written before 1978, has in it a provision that lawyers sometimes refer to as "a second bite of the apple." It's a provision that seems to have been included on the theory that writers are a feckless lot whose families need an extra measure of protection. Under the old law, a copyright offers protection for twenty-eight years, renewable for a second term. A copyright holder can sign away his rights for both



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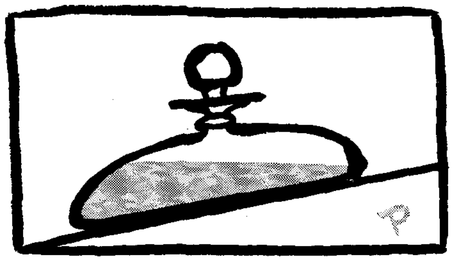
terms. But if the copyright holder signs away his rights forever and dies before the first term is up, the rights revert to his heirs for the renewal term. Twenty-eight years after the original copyright, they can take out a renewal copyright as if he had not signed anything. They get a second bite of the apple. In other words, Frankie Lymon, whose personal life had been in disarray since grade school, had done at least one thing for his family: he had died before the first copyright term was up.

In 1984, twenty-eight years after Goldner applied for the original copyright, a young New York copyright lawyer named Richard Bennett filed for the renewal of the copyright in the name of Emira Lymon, who had never received any money from Frankie Lymon's songs. "What Goldner did was a common practice," Bennett said later. "The record business in those days had a system of morality that was slightly below the Mafia. Goldner's fatal mistake was that he was a fifty-per-cent thief, and not a hundred-per-cent thief. Lymon's name was there, so the widow could take out a copyright and demand her money." Bennett did more than make a claim for Emira Lymon for the renewal term: he filed a suit in federal court in New York against Morris Levy, two of Levy's companies, BMI, and Maxwell T. Cohen, Frankie Lymon's lawyer. In a fifty-five-page complaint, Bennett alleged that the defendants had committed fraudulent acts against Frankie Lymon and his widow—not to speak of breaches of fiduciary obligation and copyright infringement and violations of the Sherman Act, the Lanham Act, and the RICO statutes. He said that both Morris Levy and George Goldner had fraudulently represented themselves as co-authors of a song written entirely by Frankie Lymon, that BMI had redirected royalties to Levy without so much as a casual inquiry, that Maxwell T. Cohen had basically been acting for Levy rather than for Lymon, and that what was meant as a release of only performer's rights to Levy had been altered to include all future copyright royalties.

Bennett was working with Chuck Rubin, of the Artists Rights Enforcement Corporation. Rubin, a former agent, is in the business of helping singers and writers from the early days of rock and roll collect money owed to them—a task that sometimes requires research coupled with persistent letter writing, and sometimes requires a lawsuit. When Rubin began his business, in 1981, many of the figures of early rock had pretty much given up on the idea of collecting any money. "It's so tough getting paid when you're on *top*," Rubin has said. "They couldn't believe they could get any money years later." His first successful case involved prying some performers' royalties for the Teenagers out of a television series called "The Roots of Rock and Roll." While working on a followup case for the Teenagers, he learned from one of Frankie Lymon's brothers that the author of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" had left a widow.

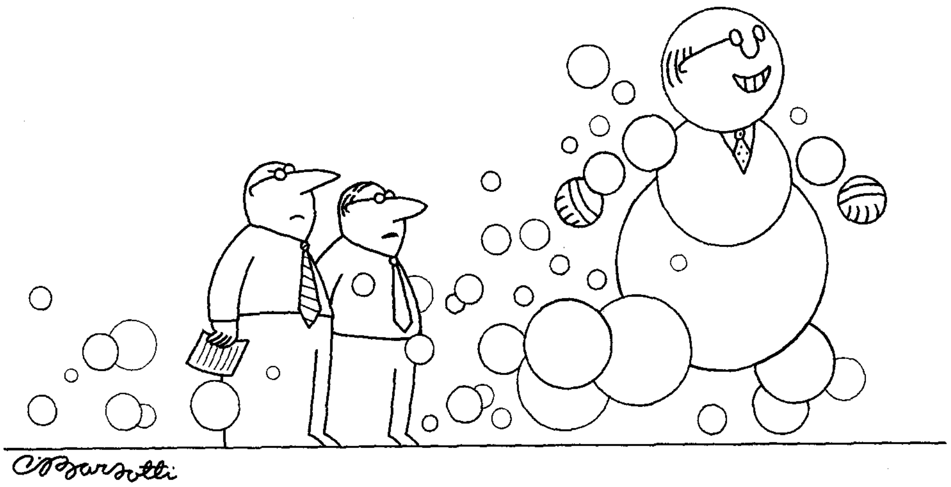
Although Rubin has been called "a white knight of rock" by the New York *Times*, he has also grown accustomed to hearing himself referred to as a hired gun or even a scavenger: he ordinarily takes fifty per cent of whatever is recovered. Emira Lymon's family lawyer, a solo practitioner in Augusta named William McCracken, was not alarmed by the fifty-fifty split, as long as the lawyers' share didn't come out of his client's half. McCracken figured that Rubin's cut was no more than what is taken by people who trace lost heirs, and, having himself once made an inconclusive pass at finding out about Frankie Lymon's royalties, he believed that orchestrating a recovery effort would require a specialist. Rubin, who eventually estimated the past and future royalties of a classic like "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" at "a conservative million," had begun to investigate how much of that money might rightfully belong to Emira Eagle Lymon. "That," he later recalled, "was when we ran head on into the face of Morris Levy."

Although Morris Levy's name appeared as Frankie Lymon's co-writer, there was a widespread assumption in the music business that Levy's writing was confined to checks, and that he wrote those only if he saw absolutely no alternative. According to Richard Barrett, one of Levy's mottoes was "You don't ask, you don't get." Barrett, the acknowledged discoverer of the Teenagers, has said that Levy was not even in the record business when "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" was written. The two surviving Teenagers were available to testify that they hadn't met Levy until a year after they recorded "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" None of that meant that Levy would not contest Emira Eagle Lymon's claim to previous royalties, or even her attempt to collect Frankie Lymon's royalties for the renewal term. In the record business, a common response to a reminder that money was owed someone was "So sue"; Levy's companies were customarily involved in half a dozen lawsuits. Levy's response to being confronted with claims that he had, in effect, stolen "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" came down to "So prove it."



Even Levy's friends said that he gave no quarter to his enemies, and Chuck Rubin, a man whose business could exist only on the premise that people like Levy were crooks and exploiters, was becoming more his enemy every day. Levy, asked about Rubin during a deposition, said, "Chuck Rubin is a guy who didn't happen in the business, and then he created a new business of harassing people and suing people and starting lawsuits and threatening people, and my personal opinion would be he'd sell his mother for a nickel." Also, Levy was not accustomed to backing down or apologizing. He was not simply the sort of man who hung out with gangsters but the sort of man who bragged about hanging out with gangsters, and challenged the authorities to prove that he and his friends had done anything illegal. Norman Sheresky, who acted as Levy's divorce lawyer two or three times, says he once set up a meeting between Levy and another friend of his—a television producer who was investigating the commercial possibilities of a soap-opera theme song. The two men seemed to hit it off. Levy offered the producer not only a substantial advance but a royalty percentage that was way beyond what other publishers had proposed. When the producer asked him how he was able to make such an offer, Levy replied cheerfully, "Because I'm going to fuck you on the royalties. You'll never see a dime."

In a deposition taken by Richard



"Still, he's a vice-president and you're not."

• •

Bennett, Levy said flatly that he had been one of the writers of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" ("I made some changes in the lyric") and that he had written many other songs ("Maybe thirty, forty. I don't know exactly"). All this writing, Levy explained, was collaborative. "It's not like you see a composer sitting at a piano and writing a whole bunch of music," he testified during that deposition. "I think I would be misleading you if I said I wrote songs, per se, like Chopin."

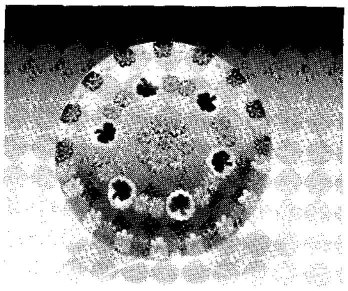
Maintaining the rights for the renewal term seemed like a much more formidable challenge for Levy than resisting Emira Lymon's claims for royalties during the first twenty-eight years. The law was absolutely clear that Frankie Lymon's share of the copyright would revert to his widow. Emira Eagle Lymon would not accept a rather modest settlement Levy offered for those rights and for what she claimed was owed her during the original copyright term. But Levy was not left without a defense. He said that it was not at all clear that Emira Eagle Lymon was in fact Frankie Lymon's widow.

Levy may well have remembered that in New York in the sixties Lymon seemed to have had a wife called Mickey—not from Georgia, not a schoolteacher, and, alas, not terribly respectable. There had been a reminder of Mickey just a couple of years before Bennett's suit. After Diana Ross's version of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" became a hit, a woman then in the Delaware County Prison for shoplifting—a woman who was using the name of Jacqueline Green but had also been Mickey Phillips and Elizabeth Waters—told a young Philadelphia lawyer named Dwight Peterson that she was the widow of Frankie Lymon and should be due some royalties. Peterson wrote a few letters—he wrote to Levy's company Roulette Records, among others—and was simply ignored. Finally, he managed to get a reply from BMI, informing him that all royalties had been transferred to Morris Levy years before. To Peterson, who was unaware of the second-bite-of-the-apple provision and not overconfident of the reliability of his client's information, that had seemed to be about as far as he could go.

Six weeks after Bennett's complaint was filed in federal district court, Peterson got a call from an excited Elizabeth Waters. She told him to look in the Philadelphia *Daily News*. An entertainment column written by Masco Young was headlined "ROYALTY WINDFALL FOR SINGER'S WIDOW?" The item said, "The mushrooming interest in the golden oldies tunes of the '50s and '60s has created a windfall of royalties. According to what Our Town's Jerry Blavat tells me, 'There's a nice chunk of dough that has been accumulating at Roulette Records all these years for Frankie Lymon's estate, and the only known legitimate heir is a Philadelphia girl he married in January 1964 in Virginia. Her name at the time was Elizabeth Waters.' " Peterson phoned Blavat, the oldies disk jockey, who was a longtime acquaintance of Levy's, and this time he had no trouble at all getting through to Roulette Records. In fact, Blavat escorted him to New York in a limousine. Elizabeth Waters wasn't along herself; she was back in prison for retail theft. At Roulette Records, there was, of course, no chunk of dough that had been accumulating for Frankie Lymon's widow—it had all gone to Levy—but there was a deal to be made. As it worked out, Elizabeth Waters agreed that Levy could remain the publisher of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" for the renewal term; she was given a ten-thousand-dollar advance against the royalties that would be due to Frankie Lymon; money was promised for her legal fees involved in contesting Emira Eagle Lymon's claims to widowhood; and, concerning whatever might have happened to the royalties from "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" during the first twenty-eight-year term, she agreed to let bygones be bygones.

Levy had also found a third widow—Zola Taylor, at one time the female singer for the Platters, who had once shown up in the columns as having tied the knot with Frankie in Las Vegas. Richard Bennett took to referring to Zola Taylor as "Levy's bullpen widow." Levy made the same deal with her that he had made with Elizabeth Waters. All this stopped Emira Eagle Lymon's suit against Levy before his lawyers had even answered the complaint: if she was not in fact the authentic widow, she could neither claim the second bite of the apple nor claim standing in court to argue about what had happened to her share of the first bite.

THE *Star*, a supermarket tabloid, headlined its story "THREE 'WIDOWS' FIGHT FOR MILLIONS FROM WOMAN-CRAZY TEEN SINGER." The presence of the three widows resulted in the most television coverage Frankie Lymon had received since the days of "The Ed Sullivan Show." They were on "Entertainment Tonight" and CBS's "West 57th." (Morris Levy also appeared in the "West 57th" segment, and uttered what became an industry classic on the joys of collecting copyrights: "It's always pennies—nickels, pennies. But it accumulates into nice money. It works for itself. It never talks back to you.") There was some jockeying about which court was going to decide who the legal widow was. At some point in the bliz-



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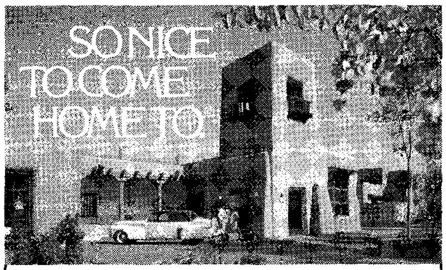

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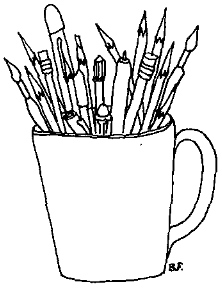
zard of motions and countermotions, Richard Bennett and Chuck Rubin had a falling out. William McCracken flew up to New York and replaced Bennett with Ira Greenberg, a commercial litigator who had gone to Harvard Law School with an Augusta lawyer McCracken knew. Finally, in late 1987, three years after Bennett filed his complaint, a trial began in the Manhattan Surrogate Court, with Surrogate Marie Lambert presiding.

Judge Lambert, a dramatic, contentious activist on the bench, was summed up by Barbara Goldsmith, in her book on the epic dispute over the estate of J. Seward Johnson, as "part Portia, part Tugboat Annie." In the Lymon case, a settlement that Judge Lambert had been pressing was rejected by Emira's side, and there were some who thought that the judge sounded particularly irritated with Ira Greenberg. On the other hand, she sometimes sounded irritated with Frankie Lymon. ("This man lied all over the place. If I am to believe all the testimony here, the man never told the truth.") In the words of one of the attorneys who participated, "It was a four-day trial that lasted ten days." Emira Eagle Lymon came to court with some advantages. Although she had been married to Frankie Lymon for only eight months, she was his wife when he died—the one whose name was on the death certificate, the one who was the bereaved widow at the funeral—and New York law carries a strong presumption that someone's final wife is his widow. A churchgoing Baptist who was still teaching school in Augusta, she had married Frankie in the Beulah Grove Baptist Church, in the presence of her family. (Frankie, it almost goes without saying, was late.) In background and demeanor, she had little in common with her two rivals. Elizabeth Waters Lymon was obviously not going to be able to get through her testimony without some exposure of her police record in the areas of shoplifting and prostitution. Zola Taylor Lymon—who in the twenty-five years since she was known as the dish among the Platters seemed to have added some weight and a lot of brass—had led a colorful life even by the standards of Manhattan Surrogate Court.



But it wasn't a contest for respectability. There was no jury. The only question was who was legally Frankie Lymon's widow. Whether Elizabeth Waters had been sought out by Morris Levy for his own ends or not, her case was hardly frivolous. She had met Frankie around 1961, when she went backstage at the Audubon Ballroom, where he was appearing during his gradual slide toward panhandling. ("I seen Frankie at the time he was a very sad, lonely person," she said in a deposition. "His career didn't look promising at all. But his personality came over very strongly with me, and that was enough for me. We fell in love; that was it.") The two of them undoubtedly lived for a time as man and wife. She had borne his child—a daughter, who died almost immediately after birth. Elizabeth had been through a lot with Frankie—the promises, the bursts of charm, the inevitable disappointments. The moment in her testimony that seemed to stick with everyone was when she said to the surrogate, "Frankie could fool you, he could fool me, Frankie could fool God. That's why we're here today."

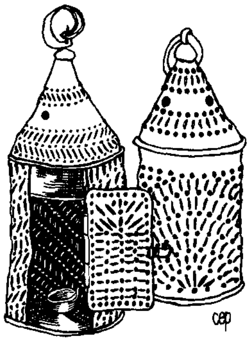
Elizabeth Waters Lymon had gone through what appeared to be a conventional wedding ceremony with Frankie Lymon; she had a license issued by a justice of the peace in Alexandria, Virginia. The problem was that she had been legally married to someone else at the time. Still, there might have been enough evidence to show that she was Frankie's common-law wife after a divorce decree from her previous marriage came through, in 1965—except that New York is not a state that recognizes common-law marriages. Her case had to be built on testimony that she and Frankie were living in Philadelphia. It was testimony that the other side tried to counter by presenting evidence that while she claimed to be living in Philadelphia she was being picked up for prostitution all the time in New York.

Zola Taylor Lymon, the bullpen widow, had a case that was not nearly so strong. Her problems started with her claim that the marriage reported in the columns as having taken place in Las Vegas actually took place in Tijuana—her description of the events sounded less like a wedding day than shore leave—and with her inability to produce a marriage license for a ceremony in either place. And there was also testimony that the wedding had been not an actual wedding but a publicity stunt to put some life into two deflated careers. (Zola would have objected to that description of her career. She said in court that at the time she was doing pretty well with Zola Taylor's All-Male Revue: "I had a singing group called the Fabulous Fi-Dells, and I had a ventriloquist called Aaron and Freddy, which, as a matter of fact, these are now stars.") Zola testified persuasively, and rather graphically, that her romance with Frankie dated all the way back to a night in 1956, when the Platters and the Teenagers were appearing in Bangor, Maine, with a touring company that also included Chuck Berry, the Coasters, the Penguins, Bo Diddley, the Teen Queens, LaVern Baker, Big Joe Turner, Fabian, Frankie Avalon, and the Drifters. There seemed to be no doubt that Frankie Lymon had lived in Zola's house in California for a while around 1965—he had apparently explained to Elizabeth Waters that Zola's feelings for him were more or less maternal—and that there had been an edgy confrontation when Elizabeth arrived in California herself. During the trial in Manhattan Surrogate Court, though, Elizabeth Waters and Zola Taylor found themselves chatting amiably about the old days. Before the trial was over, they had reached a settlement of their own, without benefit of counsel. In what someone referred to as "an accord reached in the ladies' room," they decided that if either of them won the case they would split the take fifty-fifty.

Judge Lambert decided for Elizabeth Waters. Before the ceremony in Alexandria, Elizabeth had testified, her lawyer advised her that she was free to marry. The surrogate ruled that under Pennsylvania law someone who marries in the belief that no impediment exists and then cohabits with her partner after that impediment is removed is legally married. If Frankie was legally married to Elizabeth in 1964, of course, he was not free to marry Zola Taylor in 1965 or to marry Emira Eagle in 1967. The decision brought glee in Philadelphia. "She was speechless, actually unable to talk," Dwight Peterson told a reporter who had asked about Elizabeth Waters' response. The decision was also a victory for Morris Levy, but Levy's celebration must have been restrained: at a court appearance the preceding week, he had been sentenced by a federal judge in Camden, New Jersey, to ten years in prison.

Levy was appealing his conviction, but, after twenty-five years or so of what he referred to as harassment by the F.B.I., it appeared that the federals had finally nailed him. Levy was convicted of involvement in a plan to extort money from a Philadelphia-area record distributor who, in a complicated deal, was refusing payment on the ground that he had not received the records he had been promised. Levy's co-defendants—also convicted—were Dominick (Baldy Dom) Canterino and Levy's longtime associate Gaetano (Corky) Vastola, who had broken the record distributor's jaw. The record business being what it is, Corky Vastola is registered at the Library of Congress as the writer of a few songs himself. The news accounts, though, did not describe him as a songwriter; they tended to identify him as something like "a chieftain in the DeCavalcante crime family of New Jersey."

Emira Eagle Lymon appealed the surrogate-court decision by Marie Lambert. In writing the appeal, Ira Greenberg sounded like a man much put upon who was finally having his say: "The surrogate was able to reach this conclusion only by riding roughshod over the very strong presumption of the validity of a last marriage. She also strong-armed the facts, perverted the Pennsylvania law applicable to Elizabeth's claim, excluded probative evidence offered by Emira, and ultimately adopted a story (Elizabeth's) which the surrogate herself called 'wacky' at trial." A year later, the Appellate Division did in fact reverse the surrogate's decision, in favor of Emira Eagle Lymon, and last winter the New York State Court of Appeals upheld that ruling. There was no further appeal: Emira Eagle Lymon was the legal widow of Frankie Lymon. Elizabeth Waters may have been speechless at that decision, too, but there was nobody there to record the moment. She was back in jail—in the State Correctional Institution at Muncy, in central Pennsylvania, for retail theft. Dwight Peterson—who, like a lot of people involved, had grown fond of his client during the years of the widows' case—said later that it was a shame the efforts Elizabeth had made to straighten herself out hadn't proved successful. "She just has a nasty habit of walking into a retail store and taking things that don't belong to her and forgetting to pay for them," he said.



Presumably, the final decision that Emira Lymon was Frankie Lymon's widow would enable Greenberg to take up the federal suit against Morris Levy, BMI, and others which Richard Bennett had filed five years before. But there were complications. The falling out between Chuck Rubin and Bennett had been largely over the role of Jimmy Merchant and Herman Santiago—the surviving Teenagers. The oldies craze had not enriched Merchant and Santiago, although they appeared at oldies evenings from time to time and had once put together their own Off Broadway musical celebration of the Teenagers, filling out the group with Sherman Garnes' brother, one of Frankie Lymon's brothers, and a female vocalist to do Frankie's tenor. According to a lawsuit Bennett had filed even before the surrogate-court trial began, Emira Lymon and the surviving Teenagers had agreed from the start that each of them would receive a third of the royalties—she needed their eyewitness testimony about the origin of the song, but her participation alone would guarantee a renewal of copyright under the old law—and then she was "induced to repudiate her promise by her agent, Charles Rubin, and possibly others." According to Rubin, Bennett had been fired and was simply trying to shoehorn himself back into the case. Bennett's suit, filed in federal court against both Emira Lymon and Morris Levy, contended that Merchant and Santiago as well as Frankie Lymon had written "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" Greenberg managed to have Bennett dismissed by the court as lawyer of record for Merchant and Santiago, on the ground that it would conflict with his role in the original case. But Bennett's dismissal did not get rid of the Teenagers, and neither did a suggestion by Greenberg to Bennett that Emira Lymon's side might find it worthwhile to provide Merchant and

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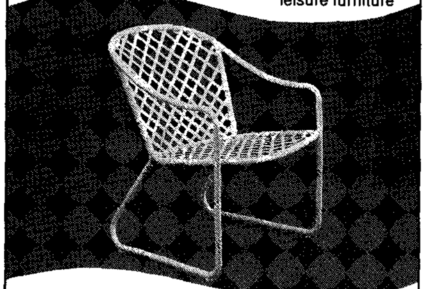

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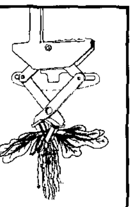

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Santiago with a small settlement—exceedingly small, in Bennett's view—to avoid trouble.

By this time, Levy was presumed to have far more serious problems to deal with than the copyright of one song. His appeal on the felony conviction had failed, and the only reason he was not in federal prison was that his doctors had presented evidence to the court that he was gravely ill with cancer. Also, he had sold his holdings in the companies involved—the publisher of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" was now a company called Windswept Pacific—and it was assumed that the new owner, with no personal stake in a grudge match with Chuck Rubin, would just as soon get the matter over with. But no real progress was made toward a settlement. Then, last May, Morris Levy died of liver cancer, at sixty-two. Richard Barrett said that he talked to a dozen or more people in the industry the day after Levy's death and nobody had one decent thing to say about him. There were in fact a few decent things said at his funeral. The principal eulogy was by Norman Sheresky. Noting that his client "took people the way they were—warts and all," Sheresky said, "Morris had plenty of warts, but he was beautiful."

Not long after Levy's death, serious negotiations began among lawyers for Emira Eagle Lymon, the Levy estate, BMI, and Windswept Pacific. This week, more than a year after the Court of Appeals' ruling decided who was Frankie Lymon's widow, the deal seems to be about done. Under its provisions, Emira Eagle Lymon will receive a lump sum—her fifty-per-cent net share would be somewhere around half a million dollars—plus a percentage of the royalties that "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" generates in the future. She has already received some royalty money: when she filed for the renewal of the copyright on "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" in 1984, she registered with ASCAP rather than BMI, and not long ago she was sent a healthy check for the money ASCAP has collected in the past several years on her behalf. She doesn't think receiving considerably more money will drastically change her life. Unlike her late husband, she has not led a life with many twists and turns. She is now a rather handsome, stocky woman, with the no-nonsense manner of someone who has dealt with hundreds of schoolchildren. She has never remarried. When she met Frankie Lymon, she was in her third year of teaching. Now, a quarter of a century later, she has taught some children of her former students. Except for a few months in the early seventies, when desegregation of the Augusta schools required some shifting around of teachers, she has spent her entire career at W. S. Hornsby, a sunny primary school across a double-lane from a black subdivision. She is still active in the Beulah Grove Baptist Church. She still lives with her mother, in a neat brick house in a subdivision built on some pleasant, rolling land. She tends to speak of the effort to win Frankie Lymon's royalties as an ordeal that had to be endured. The prospect of having to testify in court filled her with dread. She was pressed by both parties during the dispute between Rubin and Bennett, each of whom presented himself as her true protector. Herman Santiago and Jimmy Merchant phoned a lot to plead their cause. For a time, she had, in a sense, lost her good name: in the year between the surrogate-court decision and the reversal on appeal, she was, at least in the view of one court, someone who had never been legally married to the man she lived with. By chance, some of the most stressful periods of the royalties struggle coincided with some serious illnesses in her family. Talking about all of this recently, she seemed to reach for the language of Beulah Grove to sum it up: "I've really been up the rough side of the mountain. The smoke was so heavy in my eyes, I didn't know where to grasp." The first thing that comes to her mind when she is asked how she might spend the money coming to her is some minor remodelling in her house—particularly the installation of a kitchen vent that she thinks will help protect the living-room upholstery. She has no plans to quit teaching. In four years, she will be eligible for a pension.

SOME of the money Emira Lymon receives will presumably have to be set aside on the chance that the surviving Teenagers succeed in their effort to share in whatever she gets. The claim by Herman Santiago and Jimmy Merchant to have co-authored "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" may be weakened by the fact that they waited so many years to exert it. On the other hand, they are the only people left alive who can testify as eyewitnesses of the moment of creation, and they have at least one interesting piece of evidence: the first 45-r.p.m. single of "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" listed as the song's writers not just Frankie Lymon and George Goldner but also Herman Santiago. According to the surviving Teenagers, Goldner had told them that Merchant's name would have been present as well except that a 45-r.p.m. record had so little room on the label.

In all the legal maneuvering, the question of who actually wrote "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" has never made it into court, but it's unlikely that even days of testimony would provide any dependable answers. The people who were there have had their say, and there isn't a lot of overlap. The story most often repeated by people writing about the early days of doo-wop is one version or another of a tale having to do with a young man named Richard—not Richard Barrett but another Richard, who lived in the same building on 165th Street that Sherman Garnes lived in. "A lot of times, we used to rehearse in Sherman's building," Herman Santiago said not long ago. "And in Sherman's building there was this person who knew us, and he used to listen to us pretty regular, and one time he said, 'Look, here are some letters that my girlfriend has written me. Why don't you look through them and see if you guys can come up with anything?' "

"He was at that time a Coupe de Villes groupie," Jimmy Merchant added. "We hadn't changed our name to the Premiers yet."

"When Richard gave us those letters, myself and Jimmy Merchant, we looked through them," Santiago said. "We read them and we looked through them. We tried to get ideas, just to see what we could come up with. I remember that part of the letter the girl was saying that she was angry at this person because she loved him so much and he didn't feel the same way she felt. And as I kept reading she was in pain, and she was waking up early in the morning and she used to hear the birds outside her window. That's basically what we had the idea from."

In another version, a poem in the letters used the very words that inspired the song and became one of its main lines: "Why do birds sing so gay?" What Santiago and Merchant say is that they worked the sentiments of the letters into a song lyric and then Frankie Lymon helped with the tune, so an accurate credit line would have read "Words by Herman Santiago and Jimmy Merchant, music by Herman Santiago, Jimmy Merchant, and Frankie Lymon." Richard Barrett seems to accept some version of the way the love letters became a lyric, but in his telling the tune evolved through his effort to help the kids put the song to music and the fact that he knew only four chords on the piano, so maybe the credit should read "Music by the Teenagers and Richard Barrett."

The story Frankie Lymon told his new wife in Georgia apparently didn't include any of this. Asked in one deposition what Frankie had told her about the origin of the song, Emira Lymon said, "He had written the song at twelve because he had fallen in love with a teacher and she told him that he was nothing but a kid, he was too young for her. And that is why he wrote 'Why Do Fools Fall in Love?' " The part about falling in love with his teacher at twelve has a nice ring of Frankie in it, but so, in another way, does the version reported in the 1967 *Ebony* piece: "The original song the group had chosen for their audition had been inspired by an essay which Frankie had written a few weeks earlier for his seventh grade English class at Stitt Junior High School. Appalled by sordidness all around him, the common-law relationships of many grown-ups in his neighborhood and the unhappy married lives of others, the precocious 13-year-old had chosen 'Why Do Fools Fall in Love?' as the cynical theme for his essay."

Elizabeth Waters was also asked during a deposition what she knew about how "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" was written. She gave a sort of circular answer, which was her general style of testimony. She said something about how Frankie sometimes didn't feel like doing what the teacher told him to do, and something about how the later songs were done with more professionalism. Then she turned back to "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" She said, "That first one was off the top of his head."

—CALVIN TRILLIN

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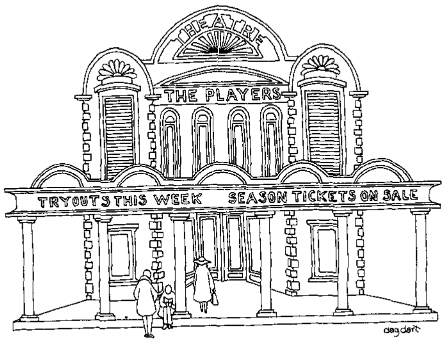
THE THEATRE

Good News

TWO events that spin the plot of Alan Ayckbourn's "Absent Friends," a comedy with melancholy underpinnings, at the Manhattan Theatre Club, occur before the action begins. They are the drowning of a young woman and a brief sexual encounter in the back seat of a car. The occasion of the play is a tea party given by three English suburban couples to console a friend of theirs, Colin, for the death of his drowned fiancée. Three couples minus one, actually, for one of the husbands is at home nursing a cold; he is a practicing hypochondriac. Everyone is edgy, of course, but Diana, the hostess, is particularly nerve-racked, because she suspects that her husband is having an affair with her friend Evelyn, a stolid, ill-natured soul who sits in almost total silence beside a baby carriage. Colin enters, bright and cheerful, complimenting his friends on their happy domestic lives. Mr. Ayckbourn, his humor never wavering, his comic tone maintained almost to the end, uncovers the desperation at the heart of each of the marriages. Action, strictly speaking, is scarce until Diana pours a pitcher of cream over her husband's head. But long before that happens Colin has rushed out to his car and brought back armloads of photograph albums, with many views of the departed; seemingly oblivious of his friends' efforts to change the subject, he goes on and on, his face genial, his eyes glittering with malice. As performed by Peter Frechette, he's as abrasive a character as I can remember. It is the hostess who cracks, sobs breaking through her tight-lipped smile and developing into uncontrollable hysterics. And it is sweet Marge, the one with the sick husband, who takes charge, ordering the men to carry Diana upstairs.

Brenda Blethyn, an English actress, who is "appearing with the permission of Actors' Equity," is so invaluable as Diana that one hopes the permission will be extended indefinitely; as Marge, a role that is barely sketched, Ellen Parker is fine, too. The rest of the actors—Gillian Anderson, as sullen Evelyn, and David Purdham and John Curless, as the two uncomfortable husbands—are exactly right, under the precise, sensitive direction of Lynne Meadow. She, of course, is the artistic director of the Manhattan Theatre Club, and has recently arranged with Mr. Ayckbourn to produce and to direct many of his plays that have never been done here. John Lee Beatty's suburban living room, as lighted by Ken Billington, is perfectly in keeping with the dramatist's intention. So are Jane Greenwood's costumes; a dreadful coat of bright multicolored squares which she has inflicted on Miss Parker is a triumph.

"MULE BONE," by Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston, was written in 1930, during the Harlem renaissance; the authors quarrelled, and the play was never produced in their lifetimes. It has now been given a magnificent production by Lincoln Center, at the Ethel Barrymore. This self-described "Comedy of Negro Life" is set in Miss Hurston's home town, in Florida, whose all-black population seems to be evenly divided into Baptists and Methodists—the Methodists being strong and assertive, the Baptists happy-go-lucky. There are thirty characters aboard, one of them Zora herself, and the opening forty minutes or so is given over to their colloquial conversation as, joking and bickering and singing, they more or less introduce themselves. Much as I enjoyed the talk and the goings on, I couldn't track any play at all. Then, near the end of the first act, two young men—a guitarist named Jim and a dancer named Dave, best friends and rivals for the love of a comely young flirt named Daisy—start to argue; Jim hits Dave on the head with a mule bone and knocks him out. Intermission. In the second act, there is a kind of kangaroo trial, which ends with Jim's being temporarily banished. As he stands, alone and sad, near some railroad ties, Dave joins him, and together they walk back to town and to a happy ending—but without Daisy, who returns to the white people she works for.



No synopsis could do justice or even seem relevant to "Mule Bone," which is more brimming treasure chest than conventional drama. That every moment of it is clear in the midst of all the activity is a tribute to the strong direction of Michael Schultz. The company, even in the small, incidental roles, is the cream of black theatre, and is full of surprises. In the second act, a woman stood up and sang beautifully, and it took me a full minute to realize that she was Theresa Merritt—Ma Rainey herself. The opposing lawyers at the trial are Arthur French (of the Negro Ensemble Company) and Leonard Jackson, and among other distinguished N.E.C. alumni are Allie Woods, Jr.; Frances Foster, a beautiful townswoman; and Clebert Ford, an old townsman. Sonny Jim Gaines, a talky deacon, was a member of Joseph Papp's black Shakespeare company and a star of the late New Lafayette, and his own plays there and at the New Federal are a match for any by Hughes or Hurston. The joy and life and artistry of this show bursts to the back of the orchestra and the top of the balcony. Music by Taj Mahal, sets by Edward Burbridge, costumes by Lewis Brown, lighting by Allen Lee Hughes—all admirable.

—EDITH OLIVER

Sucker "Bête"

THERE'S nothing modest or subtle about "La Bête," the new verse drama by David Hirson, at the O'Neill. The play—a mock-seventeenth-century didactic comedy about a fictional actor-playwright (Michael Cumpsty) whose patron (Dylan Baker) wants him to enlist the acting and writing talents of a charlatan rival (Tom McGowan) is written, after the style of *Molière, entirely in rhymed* couplets. Mr. Hirson, a newcomer to the Broadway stage, is clearly no dummy. A native of New York (your program tells you), he studied at Yale and Oxford, and has written for *The London Review of Books*, *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, and the *TLS*. (Your program also tells you the playwright's age—thirty-two—as though to advertise his precocity.) Mr. Hirson has certainly mastered the art of aping Richard Wilbur's translations of Molière: like Wilbur, he knows how to make poetic form humorous through colloquialism. But where Wilbur manages to translate Molière's moral arguments into a modern idiom, thereby widening the satire's scope so as to include contemporary society, "La Bête" is guilty of the very vices that have been comedy's chief targets almost since the beginning.

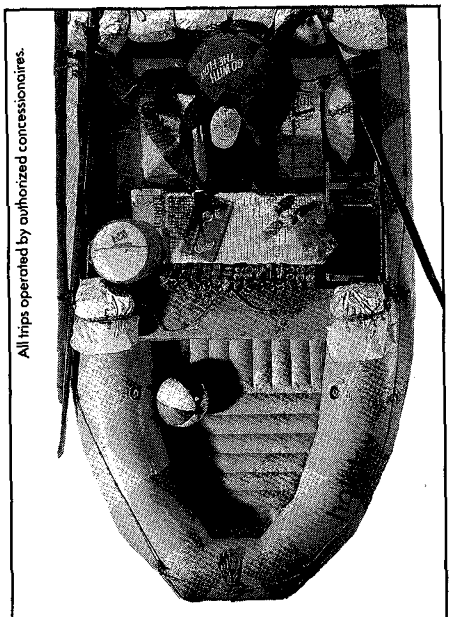
"La Bête," the latest production of Stuart Ostrow and Andrew Lloyd Webber, turns out to be one of those Broadway shows which package high-mindedness like a commodity. Because very little happens in the play, the trouble at first seems attributable to a general lack of action, but actually the problem resides in Mr. Hirson's central figure—the controversial poetaster played by Mr. McGowan. Valere is supposed to be a loathsome fellow—foppish, conceited, and endlessly impressed by his own genius. But, having brought Valere onstage after a brief exchange between the hero, Elomire (Mr. Cumpsty), and his manager, Béjart (James Greene), Mr. Hirson proceeds to do nothing more than prove that Valere is loathsome indeed, and this he does at great length, by means of a twenty-five-minute set piece for Valere, which Elomire and Béjart, for reasons unknown, fail to interrupt. The speech doesn't go anywhere: it doesn't enhance either the plot or our understanding of the precise nature of Valere's egotism; it merely establishes again and again and again and again that Valere is smug and self-worshipping. Since the play seems to have stopped dead, and since the only thing being put on display is the playwright's facility with pentameter verse, it begins to seem embarrassingly likely that Valere is willy-nilly a reflection not of society's faults but of his creator's.

More problematic is that no one in the play engages with anyone else; there are no dialogues, really, and nothing that one character says or does seems capable of affecting anyone else. We ought to be able to feel sorry for Valere when Elomire finally tells him off, or at least see something of ourselves in him. But Valere is really just a composite of showy rhymes. It's an index of the play's anti-theatricality that Jennifer Tipton has to punctuate Act I with unnecessary blackouts (to force applause from the audience); that when Valere finally does shut up, and Elomire and Béjart at last embark on a conversation with each other, the director, Richard Jones, has Mr. McGowan upstaging them with antics like falling off furniture, and whatnot; and that when, at the climax of Act I, Elomire tells Valere what he thinks of him, Mr. Jones (under whose direction nearly all the humor in Mr. McGowan's performance comes from physical buffoonery) feels he can seat Valere downstage with his back to the audience. In Act II, something almost happens when Elomire attempts to prove to his benighted patron that Valere is a mountebank by having the company perform one of his plays. But the play within a play turns out to be a washout—a narrative monologue, which, though full of inept rhymes, curiously resembles the outer play in its failure to give the actors a chance to act (as well as in its obvious didacticism).

The best thing about "La Bête" is Mr. Cumpsty's performance. One only wishes that he were playing a real classical hero, and that he and Mr. Greene had more to do. Everything else about the production seems, like the play, showy and shallow. Mr. Baker's prince is, if possible, even more foppish and effeminate than Valere. And Richard Hudson's blindingly white set and his costumes are lavish with art-historical references and theatrical jokes.

At the end of Act II, Elomire makes a big—and unfortunate—speech championing great writing. If "La Bête" were being staged at a big repertory theatre in a season that had produced a number of genuine classics, there might be something for this tirade to refer to other than (by implication) Mr. Hirson's own play. But, like the anagrammatic name of the hero, Mr. Hirson's play is self-glorifying. There's no reason for "La Bête" to be set where and when it is except to give Mr. Hirson an excuse to write in rhymed couplets, and no reason for the play to exist at all except to allow the playwright to indulge himself and the audience to feel smug. I wouldn't have thought that to be the moral purpose of comedy in any century.

—MIMI KRAMER



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MUSICAL EVENTS

Critics and Composers

WINTON DEAN's long Grove essay "Criticism" in magisterial manner defines, examines, and exemplifies what music criticism should be, and Mr. Dean himself is a model of a modern music critic. Volumes on Bizet and Handel are famous. Much of his wit, wisdom, and scholarship has appeared elsewhere, in festschrifts and other volumes of collaborative authorship, in magazines, newspapers, program notes, broadcasts; thirty of these pieces are now gathered in his "Essays on Opera" (Oxford). The first of them, "Critic and Composer," deals with related activities between which is a great gulf fixed; with Berlioz and Schumann, who were once better known for their critical writing than for their compositions; and with lesser men who trafficked on both sides of the gulf. Of J. W. Davison, music critic of the London *Times* for more than thirty years, it was said:

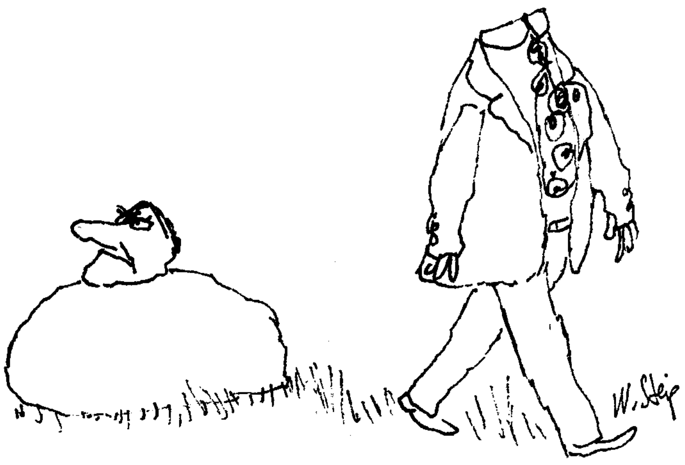
There once was a J.W.D.
Who hoped a composer to be;
  But his muse wouldn't budge,
  So he set up as judge
Over greater composers than he.

"That is not in itself a bad qualification," Mr. Dean remarks. The next seven essays are specialized—on such topics as Handel's early London copyists and Mattheson's arrangement of Handel's "Radamisto" for Hamburg—but are also a demonstration that musicology can make good reading. The rest is a stimulation and delight for both general readers and specialists. Mr. Dean's range is wide; another fascinating book could be compiled from his reviews of contemporary operas. The run of this one is from Handel, through Gluck, Haydn, Beethoven, early Meyerbeer, Berlioz, Bizet, to Janáček. It is a collection of more than occasional essays. Seven of them first appeared in *The Listener*, that BBC weekly, now deceased, which in happier days provided the ordinary man with (among much else) an expert's introduction to some work due to be broadcast. Several of them are devoted to a single opera: Haydn's "Orfeo," Cimarosa's "Matrimonio Segreto," Weber's "Euryanthe," Cornelius's "Barbier von Bagdad," Bizet's "Ivan IV."

The earliest essay dates from 1952, the latest from 1985. Ernest Newman, introducing Henry F. Chorley's "Thirty Years' Musical Recollections," wrote of the critic that "if he talks sense, his views become the commonplaces of later musical opinion, and no one thinks of crediting him in particular with them," while "if he talks nonsense, this is regarded as peculiarly his own." And Mr. Dean, in a preface to the new volume, remarks, "It may not be so necessary today as it was thirty years ago to defend Berlioz and Janáček against the hosts of Midian." He talked balanced sense about those and other composers long before it became received opinion. The pieces remain well worth reading, not least for showing how a critic can be a champion without being a propagandist—quick to discern bright merit without glossing over weakness.

Two prescient essays deal with serious Donizetti. In 1953, in a piece "inspired by curiosity as to how Benjamin Britten's coronation theme ["Gloriana"] had been handled by his predecessors," Mr. Dean asked "Could 'Roberto Devereux' stand revival?" and suggested that the answer was yes. Eleven years later, "Roberto Devereux" had its first modern revival, in Naples. The next year, the production went to Rome; an Italian Radio performance of the opera circulated widely; and in Carnegie Hall the American Opera Society presented the piece with Montserrat Caballé as its heroine—the first of many performances that she gave. One of the conditions Mr. Dean stipulated for a successful revival was "the discovery of suitable singers, in particular a soprano able to discharge the vocal rockets and Roman candles set down for Queen Elizabeth"; Mme. Caballé did for "Roberto" what Maria Callas had done for "Anna Bolena," and "Roberto" was soon no rarity. From 1970 to 1974, it was a New York City Opera staple, with Beverly Sills the heroine. But until Eve Queler and the Opera Orchestra of New York revived "Roberto" in Carnegie last month it had been missing from the New York bills for sixteen years.

"ROBERTO DEVEREUX," the fifty-third of Donizetti's seventy operas, was the last of those he wrote for Naples while house composer there. ("Poliuto" followed, but Bourbon censorship banned its performance.) However, it has never seemed to me to crown the series of Italian dramas—"Anna Bolena," "Fausta," "Parisina," "Torquato Tasso," "Lucrezia Borgia," "Maria Stuarda," "Gemma di Vergy," "Marino Faliero," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "Belisario," and "Pia de' Tolomei" are perhaps the best of them—in which he adumbrated Verdi's melodic energy, directness, and earnestness. Nor does it bear comparison with the noblest Italian compositions of his final, fevered, international years: "Maria Padilla," "Caterina Cornaro," "Maria di Rohan." (The Opéra operas—"Les Martyrs," "La Favorite," "Dom Sébastien," the unfinished "Le Duc d'Albe"—are, of course, a special case.) The plot, drawn from a French play, isn't bad: Queen Elizabeth (the soprano) loves Devereux, Earl of Essex (the tenor), but he loves Sarah, Duchess of Nottingham (the mezzo), whose husband (the baritone) is Essex's best friend and his defender until, learning of the love between Essex and Sarah, he becomes a foe and causes his death. It's a "Ballo in Maschera" tangle with an extra woman. In the second scene of "Ballo" Verdi rewrote the start of the "Ro-



Parting of the Ways

berto" prison scene—same figuration, same key, same harmonies. "Roberto" points forward—other Verdi debts to it are apparent—but also looks back: it is fascinating to hear Elizabeth and Essex adopt and alter the accents of Bellini's Norma and Pollione, and Elizabeth and Sarah those of Norma and Adalgisa. All the same, the characters of this "well-made play" seem not to have stirred Donizetti in the way that those of, say, "Pia de' Tolomei" and "Belisario" did. The piece—until Elizabeth's final aria—can leave listeners emotionally uninvolved, observing rather than sharing what the personages suffer.

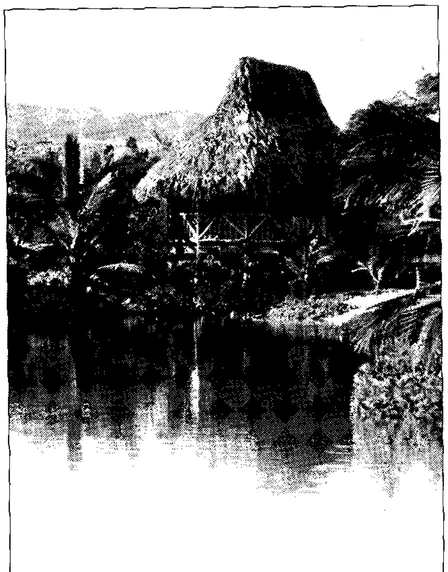
There is scarcely one Donizetti serious opera in which there are not a few pages to regret, a few pages impossible to defend. Usually, they are tripping, trashy cabalettas. The composer seems to have known the danger of writing flashy, conventional twiddles to secure easy applause for a singer's virtuosity: sometimes he fell back on them, but sometimes he didn't. The final cabaletta of "Roberto," Elizabeth's "Quel sangue versato," is elevated, not trashy; the tempo is not allegro but maestoso; the line leaps widely and chromatically; the periods become irregular; the reprise (which has a new text) carries the direction "as if terrified by a dreadful vision." And this is dramatic music of uncommon power: a vivid portrait of a proud, royal woman lost to propriety and reason in her despair at having condemned to death the man she loves. Her final, wild cry—"Let James be King!"—is wrenched from her in a passing modulation. On the other hand, the Queen's first-act cabaletta is justly described by Mr. Dean as "absurdly chirpy and undignified," and Essex sings a cabaletta to his prison cavatina, over oompah accompaniment, to a jaunty ballet-class tune. Donizetti's instinct did not fail him as he gave musical accent to dialogue in recitative and arioso, but the score is a strange mixture of high and low. It was composed under stress, in the weeks after the composer's beloved wife died.

Miss Queler always engages interesting casts, bringing to New York singers we have read about in European publications. The Opera Orchestra "Roberto" will probably be remembered less for any revelation of Donizettian drama than for the New York début of the Kirov baritone Vladimir Chernov, as Nottingham. He has an excellent voice, smooth, supple, and strong, which rises and rings without strain, and an honest, appealing way with phrases. (He is billed to sing Verdi's Miller at the Met in April.) Essex was another local débutant, the Mexican tenor Fernando de la Mora; he was able but nothing special. Mara Zampieri, due to sing Elizabeth, was ill, and Martile Rowland stepped in to save the show. She was confident, but her loud high notes struck unpleasantly on the ear. The soprano, the tenor, and the mezzo (Stella Zambalis) all set store by loudness.

Miss Queler's next presentation was of Bellini's "La Sonnambula," which had been missing from the New York bills for eighteen years. In his previous opera, "I Capuleti," Bellini tried what a critic of the time discerned as, amid the energetic martial episodes, "a completely new genre, not noisy but pensive, harmonious, and very gentle," and in "La Sonnambula" he pursued it, leaving the vigorous *canto d'azione* of his earlier operas to be taken up and developed by Donizetti and Verdi. J. Wrey Mould—who with W. S. Rockstro edited the first "Sonnambula" score to show the tenor music in its original, extravagantly high keys, as composed for Rubini—expressed the Victorian view of the once very popular opera. Modern listeners to an accomplished, unaffected modern performance can share it:

> In this sweet pastoral everything is of the most pure simplicity, combined with a genial spirit of truth and delicious *naïveté;* it speaks tenderly and appealingly of the Spring-tide and its delights: the very "Hermann and Dorothea" of Goethe is not more touchingly rural than this bright offspring of the Swan of Catania. The opening song of morning-welcome; the first expressions of Amina's beatitude; and the mutual felicity of the two lovers, are master-pieces of unaffected grace: the soul *must* be purified to reciprocate the feelings of two youthful hearts represented as enjoying so tranquil a bliss; all is calm, serene, and transparent as the purest summer sky; then comes the scene where tenderness changes to expressions of passion the most intense, and anguish the most insupportable; finally, we have the heart-broken sobs of Elvino, an effusion which nor can the audience hear, nor the vocal histrionic express, without being suffused in tears.

The librettist was Felice Romani, who in connection with "La Sonnambula" and its heroine evoked paintings by Albani and idylls of Theocritus: "in



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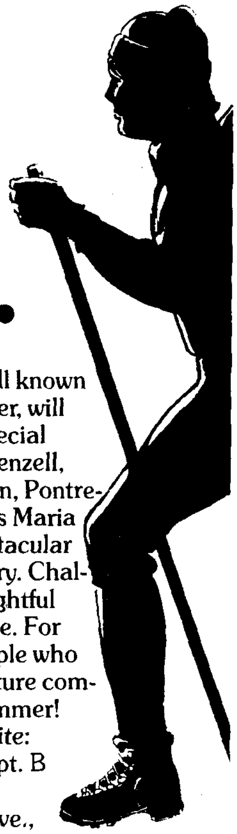

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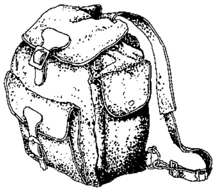

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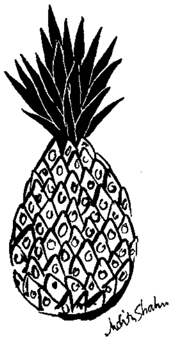
HANDMADE IN EGYPT

every motion, every glance, every sigh a certain idealized quality, commingled with realism." But June Anderson, the Carnegie Amina, was patchy. There were many beautifully touched notes but also some that were pinched or squeezed. Her phrasing lacked flow and simple charm; expression tended to be slow, heavy, and loud, and many high notes were clung to. The star of the show was the Elvino, Raúl Giménez, singing his first role in New York. (He gave a Tully recital in 1989.) This Argentine tenor came to prominence in 1988 with a Rossini recital, on Nimbus, in which he sang rings around any of his rivals in the repertory: grace, fleetness, tenderness, brio, vivacity of rhythmic impetus, variety of tonal shadings, and a winning way with words combined. One fault there was, an inclination to aspirate divisions, but it was evidently a mannerism, not a technical inadequacy, for in a subsequent Nimbus recital, of Bellini and Donizetti, it was largely conquered. In Carnegie, the promise of the records was fulfilled: Mr. Giménez's Elvino (in the transposed keys of the familiar Ricordi score) was a delight. There was gentleness, ample power, bright, firm clearness at climaxes without brute forcing, melting diminuendo. The best moments of Amina's "Ah, non credea" were the two phrases contributed to it by the tenor. Paul Plishka was a reliable Rodolfo, if not one to persuade doubters that "Vi ravviso" is the most beautiful bass aria ever composed.



A Berlin Comic Opera production of Gluck's "Orfeo"—directed by Harry Kupfer, with the countertenor Jochen Kowalski in the title role—which has been much praised and has travelled widely, came to the Brooklyn Academy last week. I didn't enjoy it as much as I'd hoped. I thought it worked against Gluck's opera—not merely missing but deliberately contradicting its content, and reducing the passion and directness to a dry theorem. Mr. Kupfer's Orpheus is a pop singer; Eurydice is killed in the street; Erebus is a psychiatric ward, and the Elysian Fields a dream escape from it. Orpheus ends the evening in white tie and tails, Bärenreiter vocal score in hand, entertaining a fashionable audience with a demonstration that even the keenest and saddest things in life can be trivialized as matter for a commercially successful song. It may be that Mr. Kupfer despises the work, feels that the composer himself acted much as this Orpheus does. He has staged not Gluck's opera but a criticism of it—and a satire to stir audiences into questioning their ready response to the affective powers of operatic music. (What would Mr. Kupfer make of "La Sonnambula"?) Such questioning is not unjustified—perhaps not even when it takes the form of dismembering a masterpiece. The work will survive its temporary disintegration. But critical commentary—Mr. Kupfer pursues his with intelligent verve—must not be confused with a sensitive performance of the opera itself.

The musical execution was devised to make Mr. Kupfer's case; Gluck was not given much chance to put his. Hartmut Haenchen's conducting lacked force, accent, vigor. The choruses—Orpheus' human companions, the fierce Furies placated at last by his song, the Blessed Spirits in their rapt, dream state, drugged by beauty—were represented by a well-drilled choral society, stationed before one foot of the proscenium arch. Hans Schavernoch's set was a pair of tall screens, made of a material sometimes reflecting, sometimes transparent, erected on a turntable in near-ceaseless counterclockwise motion; in projections at either side, views of opera houses and their audiences appeared. The Vienna score, shorn of the concluding ballet, was used. Mr. Kowalski's countertenor compassed its range with an ease and evenness that few male singers of the role command. His sound was well formed, and agreeable in quality, but monochrome, and his performance was monotonous. Emotion was signalled not so much by words strikingly uttered or by noble beauty of tone as by sudden, jerky physical movements and wide-eyed stares. By the first stanza of his first air, Orpheus had run through his gamut of expressive device. The opera was sung in German translation. Since this was a "modern" production, both Orpheus and Eurydice (Dagmar Schellenberger-Ernst) spent a good deal of the time down on the ground.

—Andrew Porter

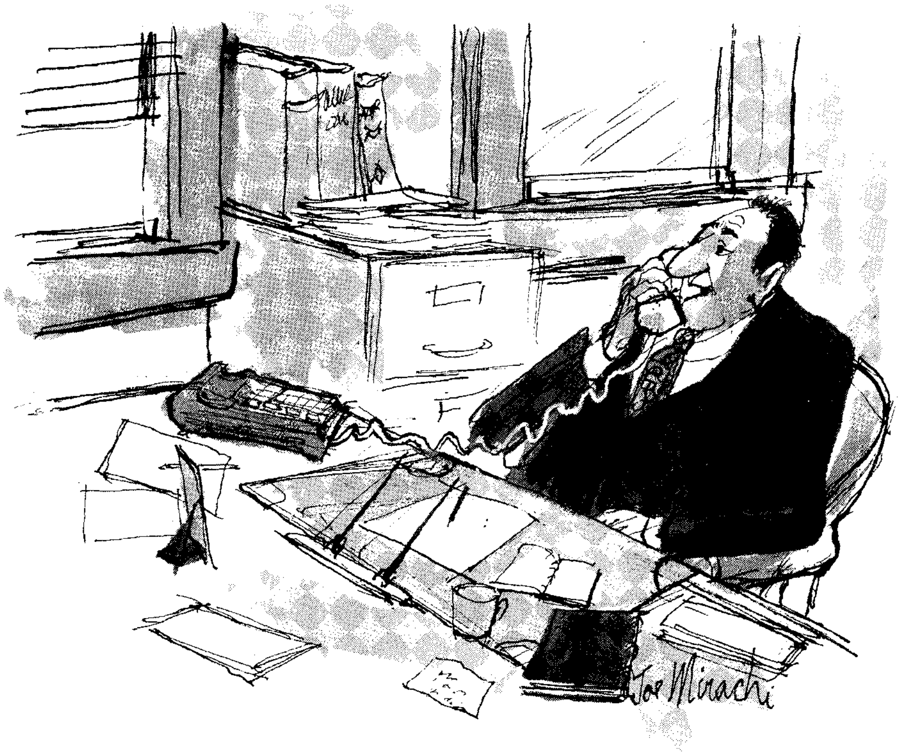
THE CURRENT CINEMA

Moth and Flame

Jonathan Demme's "The Silence of the Lambs" is artful pulp—tabloid material treated with intelligence and care and a weird kind of sensitivity. It's based on a 1988 novel, of the same title, by Thomas Harris, who specializes in dreaming up outré styles of serial murder. In Harris's 1981 thriller, "Red Dragon" (the movie version, directed by Michael Mann, was called "Manhunter"), the killer's signature is shards of mirrored glass placed in the eyes and mouth of each victim; in this one, the villain kidnaps women, kills them, and then peels off large swatches of their skin. Both novels are structured as race-against-the-clock manhunts, with F.B.I. investigators subjecting every tiny bit of evidence to the most exhaustive forensic and psychological examination in an attempt to make sense of the murderer's apparently random pattern. Although Harris's stories draw some of their power from the vividly imagined monstrousness of the crimes, and some of their suspense from the agonizingly incremental nature of police procedure, the intensity of his work can't be fully explained by the skill with which he manipulates those standard, surefire elements of the genre. This picture—whose screenplay, by Ted Tally, is extremely faithful to the novel—is even more disturbing than its grisly subject suggests, because Harris and Demme don't allow the audience to distance itself in any of the usual ways. The movie has an unnerving intimacy; when it's over, you feel rattled and uncertain, as if you'd just received a threatening phone call.

The heroine of "The Silence of the Lambs" is an earnest F.B.I. trainee named Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster). She's selected by the head of the bureau's behavioral-science department, Jack Crawford (Scott Glenn), to conduct an interview with Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins), a psychiatrist who is also a famous mass murderer: he liked to kill his patients and eat their organs, prepared as gourmet meals. The extra precautions his jailers take are an indication of how dangerous he is: his cell, in a high-security hospital for the criminally insane, is equipped with a shield of unbreakable Plexiglas; his keepers are forbidden to touch him, because he has been known to sink his teeth into the face of anyone who gets too close; when he has to be moved from his cell, he's provided with a straitjacket and an alarming-looking restraining mask, and is lashed to a hand truck on which he can be wheeled from one place to another. Lecter, who also appeared in "Red Dragon," is Harris's Professor Moriarty: the mythological criminal genius, the investigator's ultimate test. He is, like Moriarty, the final problem—the evil that can't be resolved. Crawford sends Starling to see Lecter in the hope that the psychiatrist's twisted expertise can somehow be used to help the bureau catch the flayer-killer, known popularly as Buffalo Bill. (Starling thinks her assignment is in service of a long-term research project; Crawford doesn't tell her his real purpose right away.) The first face-to-face meeting of Starling and Lecter sets the tone for the movie. He stares at her, through the Plexiglas, with the piercing concentration of a predator. We sense that he's probing her, searching for her weak spots, taking her measure with a psychiatrist's practiced eye. The gleam in that eye, however, is clearly not professional; the burning-bright look he trains on his subject is openly malicious—an inhuman combination of avidity and clinical detachment. And Starling doesn't flinch. We know she's spooked, but she's too proud to avert her eyes from his scrutiny, and her strength seems to take Lecter by surprise; it piques his interest, makes him want to know more. Starling, without quite understanding what she's doing, turns Lecter's curiosity to her advantage: in the course of the film, their conversations turn into edgy, complex transactions in which she reveals pieces of her inner life—her fears, her memories—in return for Lecter's hints on how to find Buffalo Bill.

Starling and Lecter have only four scenes together, but their relationship dominates the movie. Hopkins plays the monster with fine cold relish. He's in superb control of his effects; although Lecter's madness is relentless, absolute, Hopkins keeps it from becoming monotonous. He gives it shadings—variations in intensity, flashes of macabre wit, and even, at one point, a suggestion of simple human feeling. When Starling comes out with an especially painful memory from her childhood—one that seems to account for her moral core, which is what Lecter finds so fascinating about her—he says, quietly,



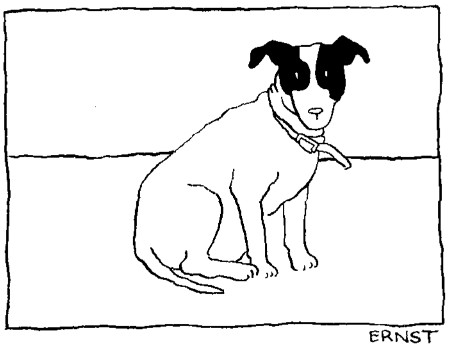
"Could you give me a moment to collect my thoughts? It's been some time since I spoke over the phone to an actual person."

“Thank you, Clarice,” and looks as if he meant it. (Five minutes later, his teeth are tearing into the flesh of one of his guards.) Lecter is conceived as the incarnation of something totally alien, beyond our understanding: he can only be played in a stylized way, and Hopkins, with compact gestures and elegantly sardonic readings, gives the character a mesmeric animal stillness, the terrifying opacity of a cobra.

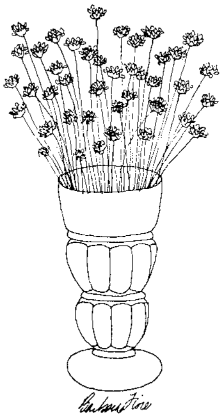
The impact of this performance is heightened by its contrast with everything surrounding it: the scrupulous realism of Demme’s style, the mundane details of police procedure, and, in particular, the emotional transparence of the heroine. What’s really original about Harris’s treatment of the police-procedural form is the way he portrays the investigators: his cops aren’t the remote, can-do authority figures we know from TV action shows—those reassuring guardians of the social order—but people whose relationship to their job is ambivalent, conflicted. For Will Graham, the hero of “Red Dragon,” the process of investigation is a kind of mental torture, and the social authority he represents is no comfort to him. He catches serial killers by forcing himself to see the world through their eyes, by reproducing their madness in himself; he’s uncannily receptive, like an impressionable child. Graham’s imagination has a frighteningly anarchic quality: there’s no mechanism for repressing even the most unassimilable, unbearable images and feelings. (He’s the detective-story equivalent of the tormented, reluctant clairvoyants of horror fiction like “The Dead Zone” and “The Fury.”) Starling’s empathic faculties aren’t freakishly overdeveloped, as Graham’s are. Her vulnerability derives from her youth, her eagerness to learn, and her need to find out who she is. She’s a student, and the goal of her education is to acquire the armor of police technique and manner. But she isn’t quite there yet. She has to confront the horrors of Lecter and Buffalo Bill without any way of knowing whether she’s adequately protected, physically or psychologically.

The fragility of Harris’s cops—the suggestion that they’re always, in some sense, operating in the dark, in a zone where it’s nearly impossible for them to orient themselves—gives his work a distinctively unsettling resonance, an emotional realism that makes us feel as exposed as Graham or Starling. In “The Silence of the Lambs,” the panic that is ordinarily repressed by the certainties of forensic technique and institutional identity isn’t fully mastered, and so the detective’s progress toward the resolution of the mystery takes on a strangely ambiguous quality. Most thrillers of this sort have a straight-ahead kind of suspense: the detective can’t wait to get his hands on the killer, and bulls forward implacably toward his goal. Here the progress of the investigation isn’t so briskly linear (or so predictable): we feel that it’s bringing us closer to something that we, and Starling, would much prefer to keep at a distance. The suspense of “The Silence of the Lambs” is reflective, oscillating between approach and avoidance (and also between the narrative mode of the detective genre, which is all confident approach, and that of the horror genre, which is all avoidance: the innocent and unwary in constant flight from the monster). Starling, the trainee, draws near Buffalo Bill with the hovering, darting motion of a moth around a flame. It’s almost too excruciating to watch, because her fluctuating responses mirror our own: we need the satisfaction of resolution, but we don’t want to have to expose ourselves to an ungovernable and annihilating evil force.

“The Silence of the Lambs” is a brilliantly effective piece of filmmaking, but it’s a difficult picture to resolve your feelings about. Although it cuts much closer to the bone than thrillers usually do, it doesn’t have the precision, the sharp focus, of a work of art. Harris’s odd genius derives from his single-mindedness, from the doggedness with which he explores his obsessions, rather than from especially acute psychological insight, and he’s not always successful in reconciling his serious concerns with his appetite for the sensational. He seems to be trying to make literature out of the unwholesome fascination of pulp—to achieve profundity through morbidity—and the ambiguity of this project can make us queasy: we want to be entertained or enlightened, but sometimes we just feel as if we were being skinned. Jonathan Demme, whose sensibility is neither sensationalist nor obsessive, does his best to play down the exploitation in the material. He treats the story not as a series of crude shocks but as a single accumulating trauma: the plot unfolds with an inexorable smoothness, as a graceful long descent toward the unspeakable. The movie is, of course, a far cry from the loose, generous-spirited comedies that Demme is known for; the tight form of the thriller and the demands of maintaining suspense don’t allow him much room for his customary digressions and eccentricities. What enables him to get his bearings in this unfamiliar territory is the richness of the central character, who—like most of the people in his other films—is someone who’s changing, learning, trying to formulate an identity. He keeps our attention on Starling and her shifting reactions to the world, and his most striking achievement in this picture is his direction of Jodie Foster. Her clear, strong features—which have sometimes given her, in other roles, a slightly impenetrable look—have never seemed so expressive. Demme treats her to one closeup after another, and she rewards him with a steady flow of small surprises. With amazing delicacy, Foster shows us the constant tension between the character’s emotions and her actions—the omnipresent self-consciousness of inexperience. When, at the movie’s climax, Starling has to use all the moves she’s been rehearsing in her classes, Foster gives every gesture a hint of tentativeness, and that subtle hesitancy makes the student’s courage incredibly touching. We may not know quite how to feel about the fears and insecurities and nightmare images that “The Silence of the Lambs” makes us vulnerable to, but we know exactly how to feel about Jodie Foster’s performance: the only adequate response is “Thank you.”



THE opening line of the published text of Tom Stoppard’s 1967 play “Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead” is *“Two* ELIZABETHANS *passing the time in a place without any visible* *character.*" This is not only a stage direction but also an abstract of the play, whose title characters, those two "ELIZABETHANS" (note the derisive tone of the generic designation), are the school friends of Hamlet who have been summoned by Claudius to Elsinore to help the King find out why his stepson is in such a bad mood. In "Hamlet," Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are about as marginal and forgettable as characters can be. They're virtually indistinguishable from each other, and their primary function in the play is to serve as a bewildered audience for Hamlet's feigned madness. They come to a bad end, but offstage: when their deaths are reported, late in the play, the news doesn't affect us at all, because the characters barely existed for us in the first place. The conceit of Stoppard's play is that these bozos in doublet and hose have some sort of life independent of their brief appearances on the stage of a great tragedy; the "place without any visible character" is the wings, where Shakespeare mostly kept them while he attended to the important business of evoking pity and terror from sordid Danish court intrigues.



"Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" is based on a modernist sort of reversal of values, with everything stood on its head. Supporting characters are now heroes, and vice versa; offstage has become center stage; tragedy is now what's scribbled in the margins, and absurdist farce is the text. The place of no visible character is in fact a quite specific and instantly recognizable location: this bare stage, on which nobodies are surrounded by nothing, is Beckett territory. When "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern" first appeared, part of its charm was that you could watch it as a kind of sophisticated burlesque of sixties theatrical fashion: that was a time, after all, when with-it directors staged *everything*—Shakespeare, Sophocles, Chekhov, you name it—as a Beckett play. In this play, Stoppard's manner is that of an antic modernist, a meta-absurdist: he seems no more reverent toward austere contemporary drama than toward Elizabethan tragedy. Most of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's conversation has the air of vaudeville, and means to remind us of the metaphysical baggy-pants routines of "Waiting for Godot," but Stoppard—a scrupulous nihilist—trivializes Beckett, too. There's nothing lyrical in the language of these exchanges: it's all undergraduate-philosophy jokes, and puns of the elaborate/inane variety favored by English cryptic crosswords. The occasional notes of pathos that Stoppard strikes have as little effect on us as the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in "Hamlet"—all that really matters is cleverness.

The shocking thing about the movie version, which was directed by the playwright, is that the material doesn't seem very funny anymore. Stoppard has "opened out" the play in all the conventional wrong-headed ways: there are several scenes set outdoors, a handful of fancy (and pointless) montages, and more action. The setting is now characterless in a different sense; we're often as confused about where we are as the title characters are, because Stoppard doesn't seem to have a clue about where to point the camera. As a movie director, he doesn't know a hawk from a handsaw. He even manages to sabotage the Ping-Pong rhythms of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's comic set pieces: the actors, Tim Roth and Gary Oldman, are hardly ever in the same frame, so we rarely have the sense that they're playing off each other. (Oldman, who sometimes suggests Stan Laurel here, succeeds in getting a few laughs anyway.) The movie is so lethargic and gloomy-looking that you'd think Stoppard didn't understand his own play. What he really doesn't understand is the movies: he loses the parodic, irreverent tone of the play partly, I think, because he isn't familiar enough with cinematic style to toy with it in the cheeky, abandoned way he toys with theatrical style. In effect, his clunky direction produces yet another reversal of values, one whose irony he may someday appreciate: "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" now seems more pathetic than comic—serious in the worst sense, like a too solemn Beckett production. In adapting his frivolous intellectual diversion for the movies, Stoppard has reduced it to significance. —TERRENCE RAFFERTY

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

FEBRUARY 15

AS the war with Iraq stretched on—it had lasted four weeks as of Wednesday—Washington has been a place full of uncertainties, with a pit-of-the-stomach feeling that the worst is yet to come. Speculation and rumors about a pending ground war filled the space that used to be taken up, not so long ago, with questions about whether there would be a war at all. We all became experts on the climate in the desert and the phases of the moon there. We have been barraged with leaks and statements and undoubtedly a great deal of disinformation, and it was very difficult to know what to believe. Then, this morning, came the Iraqi statement saying that Iraq was prepared to "deal with" the United Nations resolution calling for complete and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait, and calling for a ceasefire, but also linking a "withdrawal" to unacceptable conditions; and even after the President reacted negatively to the offer, calling it "a cruel hoax," and saying the war would go forward, Washington was swept up all day in speculation as to whether this might be the beginning of the end. Another big question was whether Iraq's first talk of withdrawal, and events to come in the next few days, might postpone or even obviate the ground war that was expected to begin imminently.

The idea that this might be a two-week war, or even a shorter one—a view that had been held in high places as well as elsewhere—had long since evaporated; the early sense of unreality had been smashed. Two and a half weeks into the war, a high official who was familiar with the planning told me that he "and a lot of people" had thought that the war would last only two or three weeks, that the air war would wreck so much that Saddam Hussein would give up. Also after the first couple of weeks, the realization grew here that the end of this war could be far messier than many people had expected, or even considered, both in the immediate military theatre and in several nations around it—that the political end of the war is a different subject from its military end. It was this worry, plus concern that this wouldn't be an easy war, that had led so many former Pentagon officials, civilian and military, to oppose the war in the first place. There were also new questions about what, exactly, our war aims were—beyond liberating Kuwait and, in the guise of doing that, smashing Saddam Hussein's military machine.

Once the war was on, and passed the initial, too easy, stage, the argument shifted from whether there should be a war to how it should be conducted, with several politicians and commentators who had supported the war arguing against a ground war—or, at least, a ground war any time soon. There was, of course, a certain amount of self-protection in this. These people were for a war but not a very unpleasant one. By early this week, some significant members of Congress had come out for taking some more weeks for the air war before beginning serious action on the ground—thus posing a potential political problem for the President.

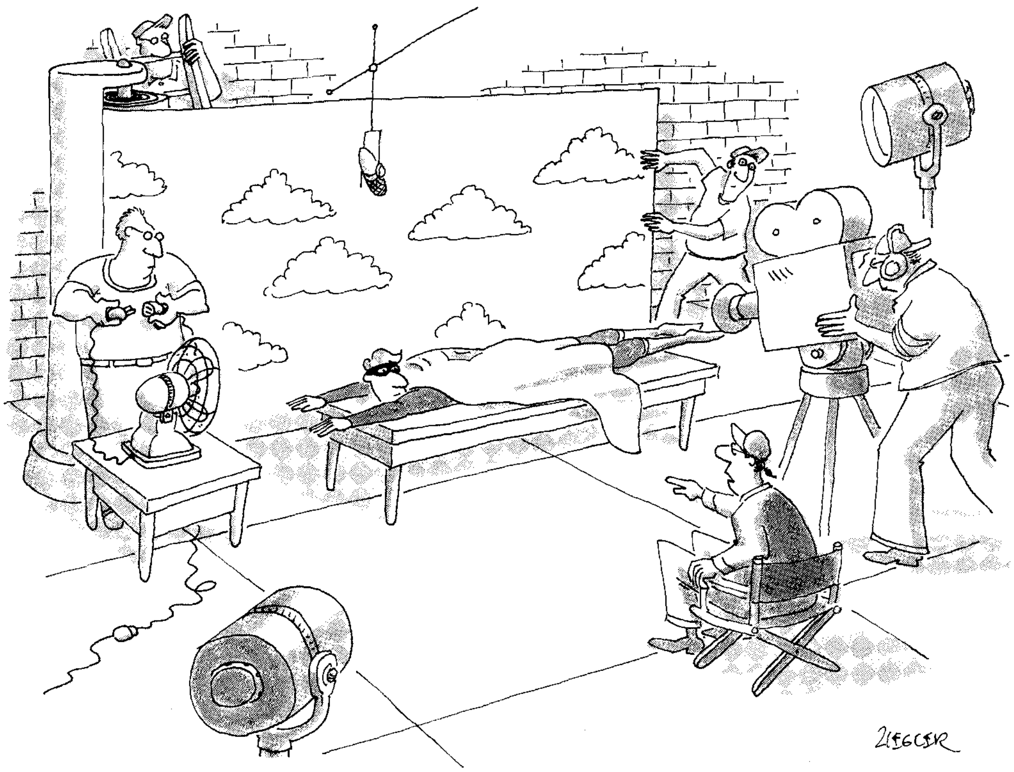
But, barring a surrender by Saddam Hussein or his troops, a ground war of some kind not only was a practical necessity—you can't seize ground from the air—but had always been in the cards. General Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had explicitly told Congress in testimony last December that the military would wage "a combined, overwhelming air-land-sea campaign." Powell was also careful to point out that these three elements wouldn't necessarily commence simultaneously. By the end of last week, some officials, including Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, were saying publicly what had been decided some time ago: that a ground war wouldn't be a full frontal assault against dug-in troops but would be waged in an attempt to flush Iraqi troops and equipment out of their Kuwaiti bunkers and expose them to more attacks from the air. One official told me last week, "A ground campaign does not mean Gallipoli." This strategy assumes that the Iraqis will coöperate by coming out. The combined air-ground plan, a couple of analysts have told me, is based on plans that had been developed over decades for a war in Europe. When I asked one of them if there is a lot of sand in Central Europe, he said that the desert, with its wide-open spaces, would be much more conducive to the plan—particularly since we have air superiority. The theory is that our air power, tactical ingenuity, and marginal advantage in mobility would bring the ground war to an end fairly quickly. But some military analysts had doubts.

Last week—the third week of the war—there were real questions as to how effective the air war, the most intense air campaign in military history, had actually been, but yesterday the Pentagon announced major headway against Iraqi forces—which many here took to be a sign that the ground war would begin soon. The military announced that a third of Iraq's artillery and nearly a third of its tanks and armored personnel carriers had been destroyed, and a large number of Iraqi troops had deserted; Lieutenant-General Thomas Kelly, the head of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Pentagon's military briefer, said yesterday that the condition of Iraq's military was now "precarious." Also yesterday, Marlin Fitzwater, the President's press secretary, said the ground war might start "at any time." In the past few days, officials had generally dismissed the idea that Hussein might sue for peace, or even make an offer, however reasonable—they had become accustomed to his intransigent ways. For some time, there had been strong indications that the ground war would begin by the end of February, and the widespread assumption was that the trip that Cheney and Powell just took to Saudi Arabia was to make final preparations. Before the trip, there were unconfirmed rumors here that General Norman Schwarzkopf, who would have to send his young troops into a ghastly battle, was resistant to starting the ground war yet. (Last fall, Schwarzkopf openly called for patience and expressed hope that there wouldn't be a war. He told the Atlanta *Journal-Constitution* that a ground war in the desert could "last a long, long time and kill an awful lot of people." He also expressed doubt about whether allied air superiority could by itself force Iraqi ground forces to stop fighting.) The purpose of the Cheney-Powell mission, officials said privately, was to determine when—not whether—the ground war would begin. As one Administration analyst explained it to me at the end of last week, the case against simply bombing for very much longer is that there is a limit to how much bombing can accomplish, especially given the dug-inness of the Iraqi troops. After a while, he said, you're wasting ordnance, reaching a point of diminishing returns, increasing the anger of the Arab populace, and making Saddam Hussein into a hero. (He said this before the bombing this week that killed a large number of civilians in Baghdad.) At the end of his trip to Saudi Arabia, Cheney himself said that at some time an air war reaches "a point of diminishing returns."

The President, who had said last week he was "skeptical" that air power alone would do the job, appeared to be caught in a serious, if not dangerous, crosscurrent. His Arab allies in the coalition, concerned about rising Muslim anger at the extensive bombing of Iraq by the allied forces, were pressing to get the war wrapped up quickly, before the instability in their own countries got out of hand. Throughout the Persian Gulf crisis, Bush, who sets great store by his personal relationships with other world leaders, has been heavily influenced by his friends who head the governments of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. At the same time, some of the military was urging that more time be taken with the air war. But at his press conference on February 5th, in which he announced the Cheney-Powell mission, he seemed to be a man who had made up his mind. An Administration official indicated to me the same day that a ground war could be expected by the end of February. Other officials have since privately confirmed that assessment. In the press conference, the President revealingly likened the situation, in which some people were calling for a few more weeks, or even months, of bombing before the ground war began, to the feeling people had had earlier in the year about giving sanctions more time. One sensed that his reaction now was not unlike what it was then: that some people just want to delay the unpleasantness, that it is for the President to decide these things—and that it is better to get it over with sooner rather than later.

Shortly before Cheney and Powell left for Saudi Arabia last Thursday, there were leaks out of the Pentagon that the ground war wouldn't begin for ten days; there were also leaks that some military officials wanted a longer delay. At the end of the Cheney-Powell mission, there were leaks that there might indeed be a delay of more than a couple of weeks. In Saudi Arabia, on Sunday, Cheney told the press that he had been struck by "the enormous size of the Iraqi military establishment," of which "a very significant part" still survives. On the trip home, he said, "Nobody wants to rush prematurely into the next phase of the campaign." Also on Sunday, the United States military briefer in Saudi Arabia said that there was still much to be done from the air. He said, "It looks like it's going to be a target-rich environment for a while." On Monday, Bush, after meeting with Cheney and Powell, said that the air war had been "very, very effective," and "It will continue for a while." He added, "We're not talking about dates for further adding to the air campaign—put it that way." He said that if his top military advisers "come to me and say there needs to be another phase, then I will make that decision." Bush is a master of ambiguity, and, as he undoubtedly wished, his statement left us—and, presumably, Saddam Hussein—unable to know what to expect. It seemed designed to make people think that the ground war wouldn't begin for quite a while, but it's worth remembering that the beginning of the war itself came sooner than most people had been led to expect.

All along, there seem to have been differing assessments by the Air Force and the Army as to what might be doable from the air. The members of Congress who thought that the war could be very brief—taken care of from the air in a matter of a couple of weeks—tended to be those closest to the Air Force. Some members' expectations were also influenced by briefings they had while touring the Middle East last year. They saw the same heads of state that the President is close to. When Senator Daniel Inouye, Democrat of Hawaii, returned from a tour in December, he predicted a five-day war. On the basis of his briefings by military commanders in Saudi Arabia, Inouye said, "If we cannot gain air superiority within six hours, let's say, wipe out their missile sites and their command-and-control centers within two, three days, then something is wrong with our defense structure." Inouye now says that "a *very* senior Air Force officer" had given him the six-hour estimate,



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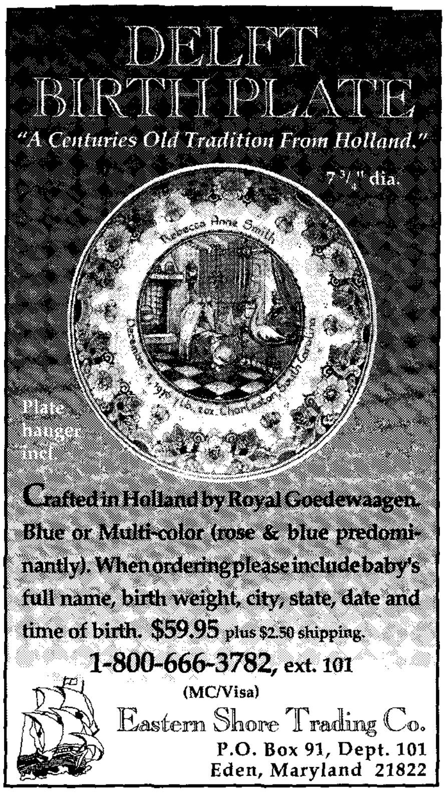
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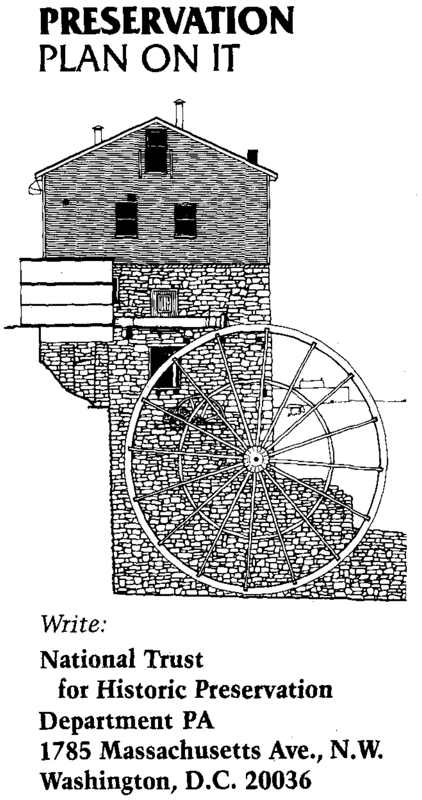
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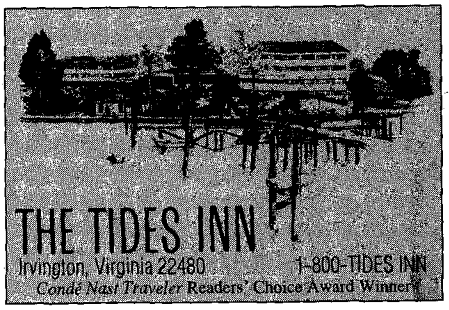
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and that other officers had predicted that the war would take a week. Senators who toured the area also got very optimistic predictions from Arab leaders who were eager for us to go to war against Saddam Hussein. According to senators who toured the Gulf region in mid-December, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said that the war would last two days, and Saudi Arabian King Fahd said it would take two hours. Both Mubarak and Fahd emphasized the technological prowess of the United States, and expressed little regard for the military abilities of Iraq. Schwarzkopf was more conservative with visiting politicians, and spelled out various possibilities ranging from a war of two weeks to six months. Fahd's Ambassador to Washington, his nephew Prince Bandar bin Sultan, also told political figures here—apparently including the President—that the war would be a very brief affair. One senator thinks the President was quite influenced by what this senator calls the "hold-your-coat crowd"—those Arab leaders who wanted us to go to war on their behalf. Someone who saw the President during the period leading up to the war believes the President was convinced the war would last from ten days to two weeks. (A senior Administration official predicted a war of this range shortly before it began.)

The President might well have gone to war anyway; but there is good reason to believe he went to war thinking it would be a different one from what it has become—even if it ends fairly soon. It is noteworthy that the President continually says, "We are on course, we are on schedule." This is an odd rallying cry. Before the war began, when people suggested that it might take a longer time than Bush was indicating, Bush would reportedly reply, "That's not what Mubarak said," or "That's not what Bandar said." The President's personal relationships with world leaders—from Beijing to Cairo—have their advantages and disadvantages. Such friendships can give rise to what one opposition senator calls "the Shah of Iran complex"—seeing a society through its leader's eyes, and imputing his political exigencies to his people.

POWELL and Schwarzkopf were always careful in their projections of how long the war might take. Not only do they reflect the inherent caution of the military but each is a politically astute man. Both of them served in Vietnam and learned a lot of lessons from that war. For a while, the rap on both of them here (probably coming from friends of the Air Force, as well as from some opponents of the war) was that as Army men they were anxious for the Army to have a big role in the Gulf War. Others argue that the opposite is the case—that, knowing what ground battle is like, they are not at all eager to send their troops into it. Vietnam haunts this war. It defines much about the way in which it's being managed. The early big buildup on our side came because Powell, remembering Vietnam, *didn't want to have to ask* for more troops—to escalate—in the course of a war. Powell, in fact, was for some time at pains to get across to people that this is *a war*—not an engagement, not an operation, not a limited action. Schwarzkopf, for his part, won't discuss body counts of enemy dead. At a recent briefing, he said, with feeling, "I'm anti-body-count. Body count means nothing, absolutely nothing." The military has decided to allow no media coverage of bodies being returned to Dover Air Force Base from the Persian Gulf. The B-52s bombing the Republican Guard, Iraq's best troops, are reminiscent of Vietnam. (Some of the new high-tech weapons have been working well, but neither the B-1 bomber, which after nearly thirty billion dollars has been essentially grounded with technical problems, nor the B-2, which after twenty-three billion dollars is plagued with delays and cost overruns—only two of them can fly—is available for the Gulf War. Both had been billed as having conventional as well as strategic capabilities.) Vietnam lingers in the military briefings in Saudi Arabia. There has been a deliberate attempt—not completely successful—to avoid getting caught in misstatements. With Vietnam not far from the front of their minds, Administration officials carefully husband public support for the Gulf War. Over and over, Bush assured Americans that "this will not be another Vietnam"—by which he seemed to mean that it wouldn't stretch on and on, and the military would be given what it needed to get the job done. Presidential advisers have gone out of their way to say that, unlike Lyndon Johnson, Bush isn't picking targets. (But he's more involved than they let on.) It's probably not only because of a change in the law concerning the military line of command that the President, Cheney, and Powell emphasize Schwarzkopf's role. Cheney says that Operation Desert Storm "is basically Norm's plan. It's fundamentally Norm's to execute." In the end, of course, it's Bush's war.

EVEN before the U.S. bombs fell this week on a bunker that the Iraqis claimed was simply a bomb shelter and the U.S. military insisted was an active command-and-control facility, Bush and Marlin Fitzwater had earlier in the week been publicly complaining about the propaganda edge Saddam Hussein appeared to be gaining by claiming that allied bombing was destroying civilian structures and killing civilians. In the background were not only street demonstrations in some Arab countries but complaints about the bombing by Gorbachev and U.N. Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. A Security Council debate on this issue had already been scheduled. (It was held in private, at U.S. insistence, yesterday.) When Washington awoke Wednesday morning to the news of the bombing—the ghastly television pictures and the Iraqi claim that as many as five hundred civilians had been killed—it was clear the Administration had a serious problem. (The number of deaths was reduced the next day, to about three hundred, but this hardly mattered.) The Administration's all-out public-relations effort on Wednesday—involving the briefers in Riyadh, Fitzwater making an unusual television statement, briefings at the Pentagon and the State Department, and a speech by Cheney—attempted to place the blame on Hussein for putting civilians in harm's way. They pointed out that Hussein has a pattern of killing his own civilians when it suits his purposes. (Cheney also said that Hussein has parked military equipment next to precious antiquities.) While most people here seemed to accept the explanation that the building did house military communications facilities and that the Iraqi regime may well have deliberately placed civilians there, they knew—as the Administration did—that that didn't end the Administration's problems.

In an attempt to sustain domestic support, keep the coalition together, and not inflame Arab passions, the Administration has in fact tried to avoid civilian targets, and made a point of saying this all along—and thus has a dilemma when Iraq deliberately mixes civilians with military targets. The policy has been to try to avoid such targets—unless they are of tremendous military importance. Wednesday, one of the Administration's "talking points"—points made on a background basis to reporters—was that after a month of bombing it was remarkable that this was the first such incident. An official told me that if Hussein placed civilians next to a facility that could cause the deaths of a great many allied troops, that wouldn't exempt it. But by now virtually all such facilities have been destroyed. The official said, "We can't let him use our values to keep us from winning this war." Officials don't want to tell Saddam Hussein that every place he puts civilians will be exempt.

Some officials thought that perhaps public expectations of an antiseptic bombing campaign had been raised too high. Earlier in the week, Pentagon briefers had defended the bombing of bridges in Baghdad, on the ground that supplies to the troops were carried over them. After the bombing of the bunker, some officials said that they would have avoided it if they had known that civilians were there. They didn't have a very good explanation as to why they didn't know this. That evening, Pentagon officials let reporters know that the bombing campaign had in fact avoided targeting a hotel in Baghdad where Western journalists stay. The incident raised questions in the minds of even some supporters of the war as to whether going after so many targets in Baghdad was essential, and the Administration reviewed its targeting policy.

In fact, the bombing of Baghdad, which had been quite heavy until early this week, was deliberately tapered off following the outcry over the bombing of three of the six bridges over the Tigris and Euphrates rivers—a decision that Pentagon officials say was taken before the bunker was hit. The bulk of the bombing had already been moved south to the Kuwaiti theatre of operations, since the most important targets to the north had already been hit. But, a Pentagon official told me today, this is not to say that Baghdad might not be returned to time and again. He pointed out that the Iraqis have shown a remarkable ability to repair certain bomb damage. He said, "The Iraqis may have the best combat engineers in the world. You knock out a bridge and they bring in a pontoon. You knock out the pontoon and they bring in Soviet-made ferryboats. A lot of airfields have facilities for quick repair. You bomb the airfields and they bolt right out and fix them." Though the subject of the bunker had receded at week's end and officials had done their best to put it in context, they knew that it had an important psychological effect on much of the world, and think that may have played a part in Saddam Hussein's peace feeler today.

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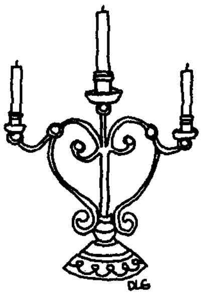
OFFICIALS had been keeping a watchful eye on attempts by others to broker a diplomatic settlement—knowing that at any time they could be confronted with an embarrassing proposal. They doubted that Saddam Hussein would agree to what they deem an acceptable proposal, but they didn't mind the idea of others—especially those (King Hussein, the Soviets) who still saw themselves as Iraq's "friends"—failing to get coöperation from Baghdad. Despite the comings and goings in Iran earlier this month of officials of various nations, and talk out of there of a possible mediation of a ceasefire, no such thing seemed possible here. Margaret Tutwiler, the State Department spokesperson, summed it up on February 4th: "What's to mediate?" Subsequently, Administration officials seemed to deliberately appear more flexible, saying—because they had to—that if someone came back from Baghdad with a pledge on the part of Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait and fulfill the other United Nations resolutions they would be delighted. (The Administration said it took Iran at its word that it would impound the some hundred and fifty Iraqi planes that have taken refuge there, in one of the more bizarre turns in this war, but some officials have doubts. The last decade's worth of relations among Iran, Iraq, and the United States forms a crazy quilt.) Iran was apparently rebuffed by Iraq in its effort to mediate a settlement, and then the Soviets made their try—which may have contributed to today's statement by Iraq, and which will continue with meetings in Moscow next week.

By now, of course, so much damage has been done to Iraq's military wherewithal—its most dangerous capabilities—that one point of the exercise has been fulfilled. On the other hand, any settlement—and perhaps the war itself—could leave Saddam Hussein in power, and a hero to much of the Arab world. Officials have drawn up a list of contingencies—actions that would be demanded of Hussein to show that he was in earnest about withdrawing—and have been of varying views as to the desirability of an end to the war with Hussein still in power and retaining a substantial, if substantially weakened, military. (There are also elaborate contingency plans for what to do if Hussein uses chemical or biological weapons—against whom, with what, and to what effect.)



Before today's events, the Administration had already been having a little trouble defining victory—short of Hussein's surrender—or even the grounds for a cessation of hostilities. In his press conference last week, the President said that "it would have to be a credible, visible, totally convincing withdrawal." Officials give varying answers to the question of what the policy would be if Iraq were driven from Kuwait but was still causing trouble—and Saddam Hussein was still in power. No official I've spoken with claims that we have U.N. authority to invade Iraq at that point—except perhaps as a tactical exercise to silence weapons shooting over the border; a senior Administration official has told me flatly that we wouldn't continue fighting to get Saddam Hussein out of power, and that we have no strategic designs on Iraq. Last week, Secretary of State James Baker testified before Congress on plans to deal with the region after the war, but he conceded that the state of the region after the war is hard to predict. He also unsubtly made it clear that it would be a lot easier to help Iraq afterward if Saddam Hussein wasn't in power. (An Administration official told me recently that our Arab allies want Hussein "taken care of" by the time the war ends but can't say so publicly.) Baker's testimony, which was designed in part to confront the criticism on Capitol Hill and elsewhere that the Administration wasn't thinking long range, was sweeping in its vision, if tenuous. Administration officials know that they will inherit a mess after the war. Baker is a very persuasive man, but it was as if he was suavely tap-dancing on a cloud—and knew it.

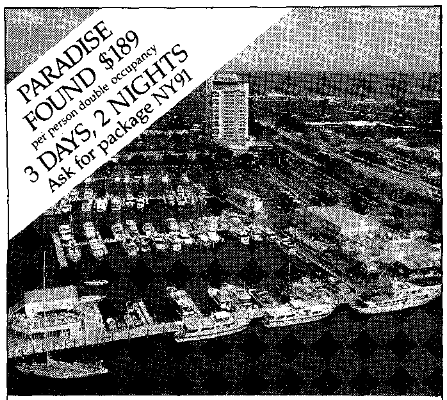
Baker's role in the formulation of a joint United States–Soviet Union statement in late January, stating the grounds for a ceasefire and saying that the two governments would work together to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict after the war, has remained the source of some speculation here. It's possible that the official story is the truth: that Baker and Dennis Ross, one of his key advisers, who negotiated the statement with the new Soviet Foreign Minister, Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, honestly didn't think that the statement was saying anything new. It's also possible to read the statement and come to that conclusion. But it was phrased in such a way as to invite the interpretation—which it received—that it was loosening the terms (which had never been clearly stated) for a cessation of hostilities, and was linking an end to the hostilities with a Middle East peace conference. "Linkage" is, of course, unacceptable to the Administration. The official explanation (in itself not very comforting) is that Baker and his colleagues were anxious about statements Bessmertnykh had made before coming to the United States—raising questions about the "very grave damages" to Iraq from the bombing and suggesting that we had expanded our war aims beyond the U.N. resolutions and wanted to make sure the Soviets didn't jump the coalition's ship. It was also suggested by officials that Baker sought to establish a good working relationship with Bessmertnykh, along the lines of the one he'd had with Eduard Shevardnadze—and Bessmertnykh was eager for some joint statement. Therefore, it's explained, Baker and Ross gave Bessmertnykh as much language as they could without, they thought, breaking with established policy. It's hard to accept that Baker and Ross, two very smart men, lost track of the nuances, but that is what we're asked to accept. We're also asked to accept that Baker not only didn't clear the statement with White House officials—that does appear to be the case—but didn't even tip off his friend the President, with whom he speaks on the phone two or three times a day, that a statement was in the works. White House staff members expressed outrage that the statement was issued less than two hours before the President was to give his State of the Union Address, taking some attention away from it, and some parts of the White House harbored the thought that Baker was trying to push the policy to a new place. Later that night, a cable went out to all our missions abroad saying that the policy hadn't changed. Perhaps because they find the simple explanation less interesting, and because Baker is a far from simple man, a number of people here concluded that the whole thing was an exercise on the part of both Baker and Bush to give the President deniability. That way, the White House could say that the President didn't know anything about it, the Israelis could be indignant that they hadn't been consulted, and the Soviets would have their statement. The theory also goes that the State Department hoped to sneak the statement out when attention would be on the President's speech. After Gorbachev said last weekend that the military operations in Iraq were "creating a threat of going beyond the limits of the [U.N.] mandate," Administration officials played down the importance of his comments, noting that he had still expressed support for the U.N. resolutions, and saying that they understood that Gorbachev, for domestic reasons, felt he needed to put some distance between himself and our Gulf policy.

It was during Bessmertnykh's visit that the Moscow summit meeting scheduled for mid-February was postponed. The only curious thing was that the Administration seemed to have any question about whether it would be postponed—yet it would have been logistical madness to have the President and his top foreign-policy advisers in Moscow in the midst of the Gulf War. It seems quite likely that, even given the trouble in the Baltics, the summit would have gone ahead if it hadn't been for the Gulf. The thinking was that we talk to the Soviets in bad times as well as better ones. It is also clear that though officials are very troubled by the turns Gorbachev has taken toward repression, they feel they have no choice but to deal with him. Though the Administration has been developing contacts with republic leaders, it sees Gorbachev as the only moderate leader of the Soviet Union, and the alternative as chaos.

When, on Tuesday, Baghdad Radio said that Saddam Hussein had told the Soviet envoy, Yevgeny Primakov, that "Iraq is prepared to extend coöperation to the Soviet Union and other nations and agencies in the interest of finding a peaceful . . . solution," the Administration was taken by surprise but said it didn't see anything new, and when, on Wednesday, Primakov said he had seen some "glimmers" of hope in his meetings with Saddam Hussein, and announced that Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz would go to Moscow on Sunday to meet with Gorbachev (the Iranian foreign minister is already there), Administration officials expressed skepticism that this would lead to anything acceptable, or even anything that could look like a real offer—thus embarrassing us if we didn't accept it. Some officials have long been suspicious of Primakov, whom they describe as "an Arabist," but they also pointed out that his earlier missions to Baghdad had yielded nothing. Though it appeared that Gorbachev, needing some domestic and international stature, might be fishing in troubled waters, or angling for future status in the Middle East, State Department officials insisted privately that the Soviets were still "on board," and were keeping them informed about their peace efforts. Yet one senior Administration official, while expressing skepticism, did say to me yesterday that if Aziz went to Moscow "you can't rule out anything," and added, "Every day, unexpected things happen."

At first, a surprised President and his top advisers thought, on the basis of the initial press reports this morning, that Hussein had offered more than, on closer examination, he appeared to be offering. The statement didn't contain an offer to withdraw unconditionally, as required by the U.N. resolution, and his proposal—offered "in appreciation of the Soviet initiative conveyed by the envoy of the Soviet leadership"—linked Iraq's "readiness to deal with" the resolution to not only a ceasefire but also a number of other things, including a negation of the other U.N. resolutions, an Israeli withdrawal from all formerly Arab territories, the transfer to Iraq of long-disputed Kuwaiti territory, a "democratic" decision about the future rule of Kuwait (as opposed to immediate restoration of the al-Sabah family), and financing of the reconstruction of Iraq by those countries "that have participated in the aggression" against it. The statement also called for more economic justice between the rich and poor nations of the regions and, in effect, told the Western nations to get out of the region and stay out. Some of the top officials saw the statement as simply another example of Iraq's using diplomacy to further its aim of weakening the coalition arrayed against it; others saw it as a sign of Hussein's desire to see the war stopped—albeit not yet on terms acceptable to us. One senior Administration official suggested to me today that it was possible that in the aftermath of the bunker incident Hussein thought he could do something creative, to shake the alliance, but this official, while deeming the proposal unacceptable, didn't rule out that it could "lead to something real." He added that if the Administration thought it was receiving a genuine ceasefire offer "we would look for ways of testing that—but we're not there yet." A senior Pentagon official said to me this morning, "It's a start—it could be the beginning of the end," though the Pentagon was publicly negative and the bombing went forward. The President's statement this morning—that when he first heard about the Iraqi proposal he was "happy that Saddam Hussein had seemed to realize that he must now withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait" but "regrettably" (the same word Baker had used in Geneva after meeting with Tariq Aziz) it "now appears to be a cruel hoax"—was said to be a reflection of the mood swing that the President and others had gone through. In his statement, the President was more explicit than before in calling for the people of Iraq "to take matters into their own hands to force Saddam Hussein the dictator to step aside," and said that he was sorry that "there is nothing new" in the statement. But at the week's end that was a matter about which officials weren't really so certain.

—ELIZABETH DREW



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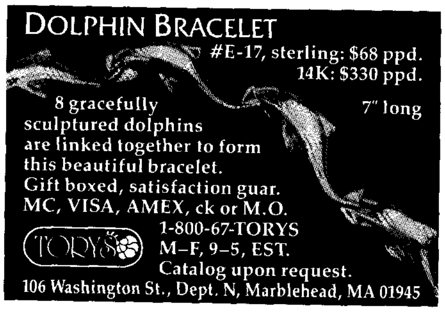

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A CRITIC AT LARGE

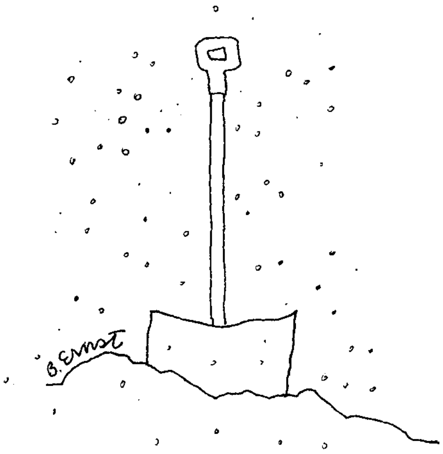
AUDUBON'S PASSION

IN 1803, an *eighteen-year-old* Frenchman who had been born in Haiti, as Jean Rabin, and who had lived in Paris just long enough to take a few drawing lessons and learn how to ice-skate, arrived in New York. For the next seventeen years, he wandered through Pennsylvania and Kentucky and Ohio and Louisiana, pursuing one quixotic money-making scheme after another. Then, in 1820, he was seized by what he afterward called his "Great Idea," and for the next thirty years—until his death, in 1851—he raced from Florida to Labrador, drawing a picture of every American bird and every American beast, beginning with the wild turkey, and including even such minor Americans as the knobbed-billed phaleris, the annulated marmot squirrel, and Richardson's meadow mouse, and ending, five hundred and eighty-four paintings later, with the silvery shrew mole. He signed his work John James Audubon, and became the nearest thing American art has had to a founding father.

Lewis Mumford once described him as an "exuberant French coxcomb," who "changed his silks for leather hunting clothes and let his hair grow down to his shoulders; and . . . gradually turned into an archetypal American, who astonishingly combined in equal measure the virtues of George Washington, Daniel Boone, and Benjamin Franklin." Already in Audubon's lifetime, his person and his legend had begun to blend backward into the first generations of American patriots. The Vanderlyn portrait of Andrew Jackson that hangs in New York's City Hall, for instance, is a composite—Jackson's head mounted on a drawing of Audubon's body. In the last portraits of Audubon, painted by his son John Woodhouse Audubon, Audubon's light, fencing master's features have even begun to fuse indistinguishably with those of General Washington.

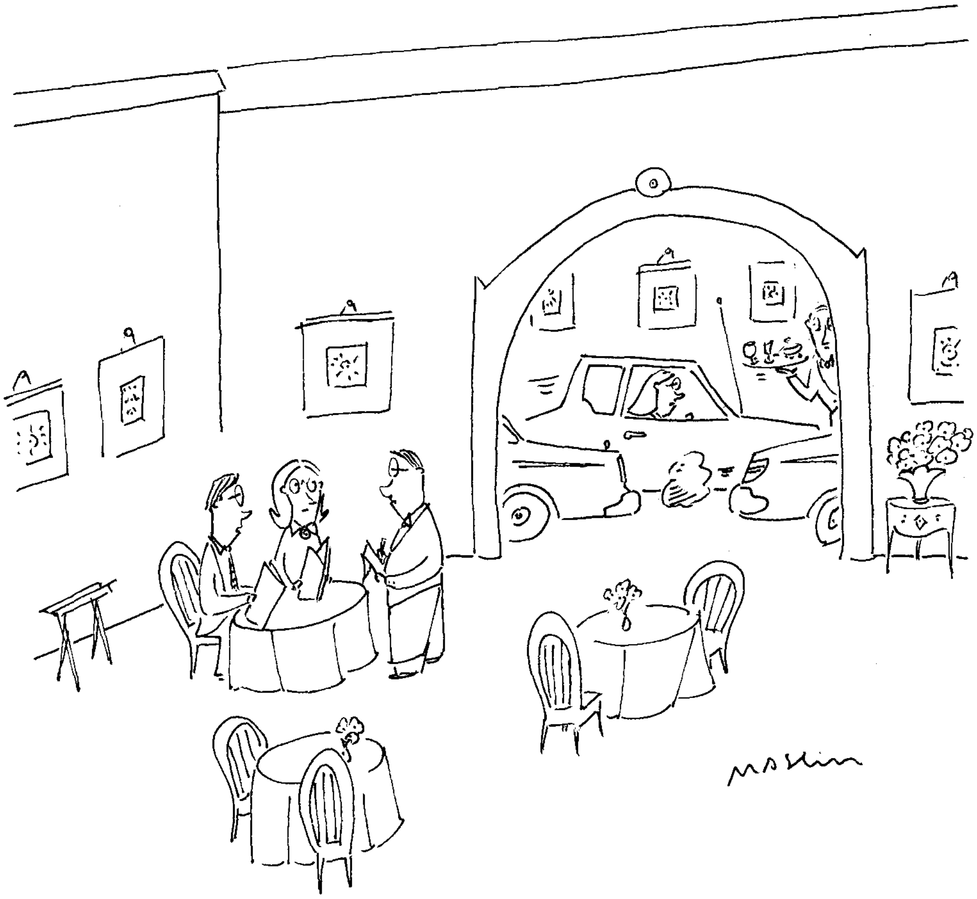
Yet Audubon's strange origins, his slow start, and the long period of shady struggle in his middle years add to the clear, eighteenth-century glow of his legend a more peculiarly nineteenth-century American touch—of frontier purification and renewal and reform. Audubon's self-transformation from the dilettante in a ruffled shirt arriving in America into the American woodsman eventually returning in triumph to France is one of the great awakenings in American biography. In his poem "Audubon: A Vision and a Question for You," Robert Penn Warren called this transformation a "passion," lending a Christian overtone to the story of Audubon's rebirth in the wilderness.

In the popular imagination, Audubon remains an archetypal American, though perhaps he now stands on the second shelf of American curios—somewhere between Betsy Ross and Johnny Appleseed. Although the last couple of years have marked no particular Audubon occasion and seen no Audubon exhibitions, he has still been the most visible of all American artists. Last year, Wellfleet Press reprinted the octavo edition of "Birds of America," to complete a republication program that began in 1989 with the reproduction of Audubon's "Quadrupeds," so that now, for the first time, both of Audubon's masterpieces are available in cheap editions in something like their original form. Then, later last year, the Audubon Society arranged for the republication of Roger Tory Peterson's "Baby Elephant" folio of "Birds of America," in which the birds have been reorganized along modern ornithological lines. Also, Dover Books has republished Audubon's accounts of his trips to Europe, the Missouri Valley, and Labrador, and Alice Ford's exhaustive biography, out of print for more than two decades, was republished in 1988 by Abbeville.



With his reputation as the father of bird sanctuaries and the begetter of the duck postage stamp, however, Audubon the artist has become more familiar than really known. We come to him sideways, repeating by rote a set of pious attitudes that his successors have intoned (nature true, nature wild, nature as it really is), and then catching out of the corner of our eye the uncanny intensity of his art—its haute-couture theatricality and ecstatic animation, its pure-white backgrounds and shadowless, cartoonish clarity—which still proves so unexpected that we are inclined either to explain it away as technique or write it off as naïveté. Yet to turn the pages of even the inadequately printed Wellfleet volumes is to recognize that Audubon remains the supreme stylist of American art, and that his formal daring enabled him to achieve a new kind of emotional concentration, which invested each of his birds and beasts with some heightened facet of his own complicated character.

Audubon was not an abstract artist, and he wasn't a mere patternmaker, but he recognized that his greatest achievement was the invention of what he referred to, modestly but pointedly, as "my style"—an American idiom as pared-down, sturdy, and adaptable as a Shaker box. (It was a style so knowingly wrought that he could teach it to John Woodhouse and trust him to execute and complete many of the last plates in "Quadrupeds" in a manner almost, though not quite, indistinguishable from his own.) The current flood of Audubonian reaches us today in a time when an uncertainty about the future of the American wilderness, which Audubon made his subject, reinforces a larger uncertainty about American manners and American appetites—about the origins of our picture of ourselves. So the questions that we put to Audubon, perhaps like those we put to any founding father, both increase in urgency and simplify in form, and have now become one indivisible question, half biographical and half formal: What was it in the man that produced the passion, and what was it in the passion that produced the style?



"How long have you had the drive-through?"

• •

EVERYONE agrees that Audubon was French and was a nearly compulsive liar; everyone also agrees that he was an archetypal American and was obsessed with scientific truth. The conventional, idealizing accounts make those Audubons successive ones, but the truth seems to be that Audubon was all these things at once. The two roles he liked best to play were the aristocratic Frenchman with a mysterious past and the simple American man of the woods. What is amazing is how gracefully he managed to inhabit both inventions, and how quickly he could exchange one for the other.

Audubon was not a small or a mean liar—he is extremely reliable on the details concerning his animals—but he had a vivid imagination, and when he was depressed he liked to entertain or console himself by making up stories about his origins, his history, and his adventures. He lived with these stories, and eventually they began to slip out in public. He suffered from *folie circulaire:* one day he would sign a letter to his wife "The Great, the Wonderful Audubon"; the next he would sink into despair.

The most ambitious lie Audubon seems to have told was about his own birth: that he was the lost Dauphin of France, whisked out of prison during the Revolution and entrusted to the care of a loyal seaman. The development of this story is typical of the process of Audubon's self-inventions. It turns up in his surviving journals for the first time when he is in France in 1828, trying to find subscribers for the first edition of "Birds." After a particularly discouraging day, he writes, "I walk the streets. I bow! I ask permission to do this or that! . . . I, who should command all." (Alice Ford thinks that his journals were bowdlerized by his granddaughters, in order to emphasize the Dauphin legend. But the fantasy is entirely in Audubon's style; only twenty-five years ago someone as hard-nosed as Mumford thought there might be something to it.) The legend is interesting not so much for its absurdity as for the way it combines his two national modes: the story may use French stock properties, but it is an *American* story, a tall tale. It places Audubon, properly, in both his worlds—halfway between Marie Antoinette and Mark Twain.

The truth about Audubon's origins may reveal why he found the Dauphin story so seductive. His father, Jean Audubon, was a sea captain. (Audubon made him an admiral; eventually, he would have him fighting with General Washington at Valley Forge, although—as Audubon perhaps knew, perhaps did not—no battle took place there.) Captain Audubon became a slave trader in Haiti. He left behind a wife in France, and took a series of mistresses. One of them, a Jeanne Rabin, gave birth to a boy in 1785. Audubon's father accepted the boy fully, though in the father's papers the son is referred to, flatly, as "Jean Rabin, Créole of Saint-Domingue." Haiti (Saint-Domingue then) was a violent place, and Audubon's father had intimations of the revolt that would erupt there in 1790. Just before it began, he took two of his illegitimate Saint-Domingue children (there was at least one other) back to France, where they were embraced by Mme. Audubon. So the Dauphin story is a truth told slant: Audubon's birth *was*, in a sense, mysterious, and the lie allowed him to make the story of his illegitimacy glorious rather than shaming.

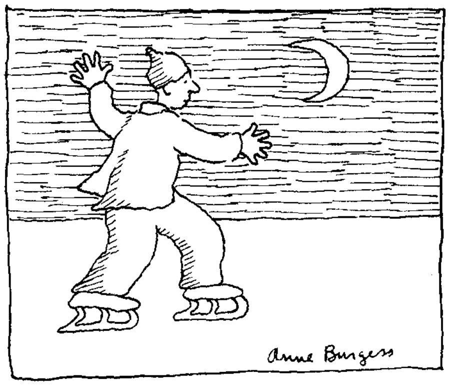
The Audubons arrived home, in Nantes, in the middle of the Revolution. Audubon's father, slave dealer and plantation owner, made an about-face and became a fanatical Republican. He turned into a kind of Jacobin commissar in the area, responsible for writing up reports on the loyalty of the region's towns and villages. Though Audubon lived in Nantes in some luxury—for the rest of his life he loved fancy clothes, parties, skating, dancing, violin playing—he was always aware of the violence around him. Another of his repeated stories was that he had seen one of his aunts dragged through the streets during the Revolution and murdered; the truth is that none of his aunts were murdered, and, in any case, his father was more likely to have been the one doing the dragging.

In 1789, Audubon's father, on a trading expedition, had stopped in Pennsylvania and—partly because he thought there was a promising vein of lead on the property—bought a farm, outside Philadelphia, called Mill Grove. In 1803, Audubon *père* shipped Jean to America to save him from being conscripted into the Napoleonic armies (the senior Audubon had by now become a fanatical Bonapartist, though not one inclined to have his son fight). By then, Pennsylvania seemed to occupy a special place in the lore of the Audubon family. In Haiti and in France, the Audubons had been surrounded every day by cruelty—the horrors of the slave system, and then the excesses of the Revolution. Pennsylvania, by contrast, was a safe place, a treasure house, a big back yard. For Audubon, the opposition between the Old and the New Worlds was not one that balanced elegant European artificiality against the honest and limitless wilderness. Instead, it set the violence and danger of the Old World against the promise of safe bourgeois comforts and pleasures in America.

Audubon remained all his life unmistakably French. He spoke with an impenetrable Inspector Clouseau accent. (Someone who ran into Audubon long before he was famous transcribed his speech just because it sounded so funny: "Hi emm en Heenglishmen," he has Audubon saying, "becas hi got a Heenglish wife.") The grammar of all his writings, though cleaned up by various editors, was always that of his first language. His vision remained French, too. All his life, he claimed that before he left for America he had studied drawing in the atelier of Jacques-Louis David. While older biographies accepted this as gospel, Ford finds it improbable. If it was a lie, though, it must have concealed another kind of truth. Audubon told the story to people who could easily have checked up on him, and he repeated it in the private journals that were intended only for his beloved wife, Lucy: "I had studied under the instruction of the celebrated David," "the pupil of my old master, David," "the lessons which I had received from the great David." Perhaps Audubon had told Lucy that story while he was courting her ("We are what we make ourselves," Audubon wrote once; it could have been the family motto), and was stuck with it.

Still, if he wasn't trained by David, he was certainly schooled in his style. At a low moment in his life, he made a living by drawing charcoal portraits entirely in the linear, neoclassical manner that David had perfected. That manner couldn't have been a stranger springboard for someone who wanted to draw birds and mammals in their natural habitats. John Constable, nearly an exact contemporary of Audubon, said once that if David's shallow, artificial, theatrical style ever became widely accepted, it would mark the end of nature painting in England. But for Audubon the vague intimations of the sublime were indistinguishable from the blurry generalizations of ignorance; he called the early Romantic landscapes and bird pictures he saw in England "washy, slack, imperfect messes." He took it for granted that the hard-edged draftsmanship of French neoclassicism was the one good grammar of art, and he remained faithful to it all his life. (He had the advantage, too, of a parallel tradition, exemplified by the flower painter Redouté, that married the precision of neoclassicism to scientific illustration. Redouté was almost the first painter in Paris to whom Audubon showed the early drawings of "Birds of America.") Audubon's animals are, in a way, distant offspring of the profile figures in the "Death of Socrates," and the diorama-like boxes in which so many of his birds are suspended are a miniaturization of David's sober stage spaces. Audubon's paintings, like L'Enfant's designs for Washington, D.C., were one of those early American achievements that developed an overblown Romantic eccentricity from a strict French neoclassical model.

Audubon also inherited the French mania for the systematic. He couldn't paint one shrike without thinking about the next one, around the corner. He was a catalogue waiting to happen; he said that as a teen-ager he had tried his hand at a "Birds of France." Though the idealized account has him throwing off his "coxcomb" sophistication in America to become a birdman and an artist, submitting himself humbly to the discipline of science and nature, the truth seems to be almost the reverse. Drawing birds, making art, inventing catalogues, producing beautiful books—all these things he thought of as French, and part of his "aristocratic" past. (An early attempt at an American bird catalogue, which Audubon might have known, had been made by another émigré Frenchman.) For Audubon, a real American was someone who went out into the woods and came back with a fortune. He wasted the first sixteen years of his life in the United States trying to become such an American, and it was only when every circumstance conspired against him, and drove him back to the French manner he had intended to abandon, that he at last found his way.



Audubon's enduring strength and weakness was his grandiosity. Immediately after his arrival in Pennsylvania, he fell in love with a beautiful local girl named Lucy Bakewell. His love for her remained the single ennobling passion of his life. (He courted Lucy in a cave, and took her to watch pewees, wearing fancy shirts that he had had made at the best haberdashery in Philadelphia—a typically Audubonian combination of Eagle Scout and Beau Brummel.) When the lead mine at Mill Grove had to be sold (Audubon claimed that he was swindled out of it), he found another large ambition—to become a retail tycoon. In 1808, he and Lucy were married, and they set out for Louisville, Kentucky, where he and a partner had gone into business as dry-goods merchants.

When Audubon arrived in Louisville, it was already a stable, mercantile, provincial city. He had to make regular trips back East on business, and it was during these trips—not trailblazing journeys away from the city and into the wilderness but trips from one town to another through well-charted country—that he drew many of his first American birds. His ecstatic sense of American nature had from the beginning a touch of the outing and the expedition—a sense of the wilderness as a park between two houses.

Audubon loved to watch birds. But his was not the spirit of so many present-day birders, for whom the birds might just as well be stamps or baseball cards. He was drawn to them as familiars, and he was interested in them as social animals. (Lucy Audubon once said, "I have a rival in every bird.") In his journals (and in his collections of bird biographies as well), what he chooses to describe is almost never the markings or the profiles—the appearance—of birds. What interests him is their behavior, their habits, their movements—the "manners" of birds, as he called them. Here he is, on a trip to Labrador, describing the varied reactions of birds to a rainstorm: "The Great Black-backed Gull alone is seen floating through the storm, screaming loudly and mournfully as it seeks its prey; not another bird is to be seen abroad; the Cormorants are all settled in the rocks close to us, the Guillemots are deep in the fissures, every Eider Duck lays under the lee of some point, her brood snugly beneath her opened wings, the Loon and the Diver have crawled among the rankest weeds, and are patiently waiting for a return of fair weather, the Grouse is quite hid under the creeping willow, the Great Gray Owl is perched on the southern declivity of some stupendous rock." It is like the opening of "Bleak House"—a portrait of the weather in a world, and of the characters within it.

THE drygoods store soon failed, and for sixteen years Audubon moved around Kentucky and Ohio and Louisiana. The Audubons had four children, two girls and two boys, and Audubon cheerfully set himself up in one unrealistic project after another. They all ended in debts and recriminations, with the again unsuccessful capitalist wandering off to watch swallows.

In 1810, Audubon had been introduced to a Philadelphia ornithologist named Alexander Wilson, who was planning a complete catalogue of American birds. Audubon recognized that Wilson's drawings were niggling and undramatic compared even with his own roughest sketches, but he would probably never have made bird painting his occupation if he had not gone finally and irredeemably bankrupt in 1819. This last bankruptcy was the consequence of a crazy scheme of his to build a mill and run a steamboat in a little Kentucky town called Henderson. It went so badly that Audubon ended up in a local jail for a few nights. He had persuaded a recent English émigré named George Keats to invest money in the plan. Some of the money belonged to George's brother, John, who was back in England, writing poems. The venture helped ruin Keats, and the name Audubon tolls in his letters like a funeral bell: "I cannot help thinking Mr Audubon a dishonest man" and "Mr Audubon has deceived you."

Bankrupt, Audubon began to make a living by drawing charcoal portraits of local merchants, at five dollars a profile. Many of the profile portraits that he was asked to draw were made on the sitter's deathbed. He was once even asked to draw the portrait of a child exhumed from the grave, and make her look beautiful and alive. He was thirty-five years old, and he had failed at everything else. It must have been heartbreaking to know the Audubons at that moment. They were a subject for a Tennessee Williams play: the overworked and beautiful and distressed mother (both of her daughters had died, one just around the time of the bankruptcy), and the young man with the accent and the frayed lace cuffs, still talking compulsively about his studies with David, about his admiral father, about his mysterious birth.

He was thrown back on his birds. They were all he had left, and Lucy thought there might be a little money in them. "It seems my Genius (if I have any) was intended that way," he wrote to her sadly. Then, cheering up, as he always did, he added that he would present the drawings to "the High Judges of Europe." In the eighteen-twenties, he perfected the new way of drawing birds that he called his style. He eventually placed on his drawings and watercolors the notation "Drawn from nature," but that was shorthand for a long and contrived process. Audubon would shoot his birds—sometimes hundreds at a time—and then skin them and take them home to stuff and paint. That was what every bird painter did. But Audubon hated the unvarying shapes and Roman-coin profiles that traditional taxidermy produced, so he began to make flexible armatures of bent wire and wood, and he arranged bird skins and feathers—sometimes even whole, uneviscerated birds—on them in animated poses. That is why his birds look, in every sense, so *wired*. He would paint a bird in a single session, recording the outline of the invented pose in firm brushstrokes and then filling in be-

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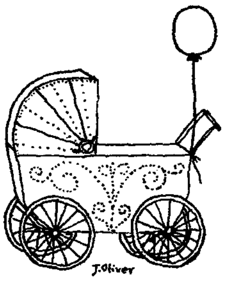
tween, like a child with a coloring book, in bright, generalizing watercolor. "My plan," he wrote, "was to form sketches in my mind's eye, each representing each family in their most constant and natural associations, and to complete those family pictures as chance might bring perfect specimens." Over the years, he accumulated not so much a jumble of nature notes and sketches as a vocabulary of firmly delineated, stylized, and even artificial shapes.

In time, Audubon began to refine these "family pictures" into a few simple formats. He invented organizing stories on which he could pin little feathery truths: petrels and terns seen from overhead, as chevrons; upright water birds, their long throats always curving close to their bodies in compressed arabesques; songbirds spread out flat, like bats. For these shapes to be articulate, they had to be seen whole and clear and close up, and so, for all their vivacity, they also began to take on an obviously "studio" quality. (Around 1824, Audubon decided that they would have to be printed life-size—an almost unprecedented conception.) It is impossible to imagine any rational point of view from which the birds might have been seen in nature; his flamingos and herons and swans fill the frame of the picture from top to bottom, as if they had come indoors to sit for the artist. Pure, isolated shapes set against a white background, they become symbols of themselves.



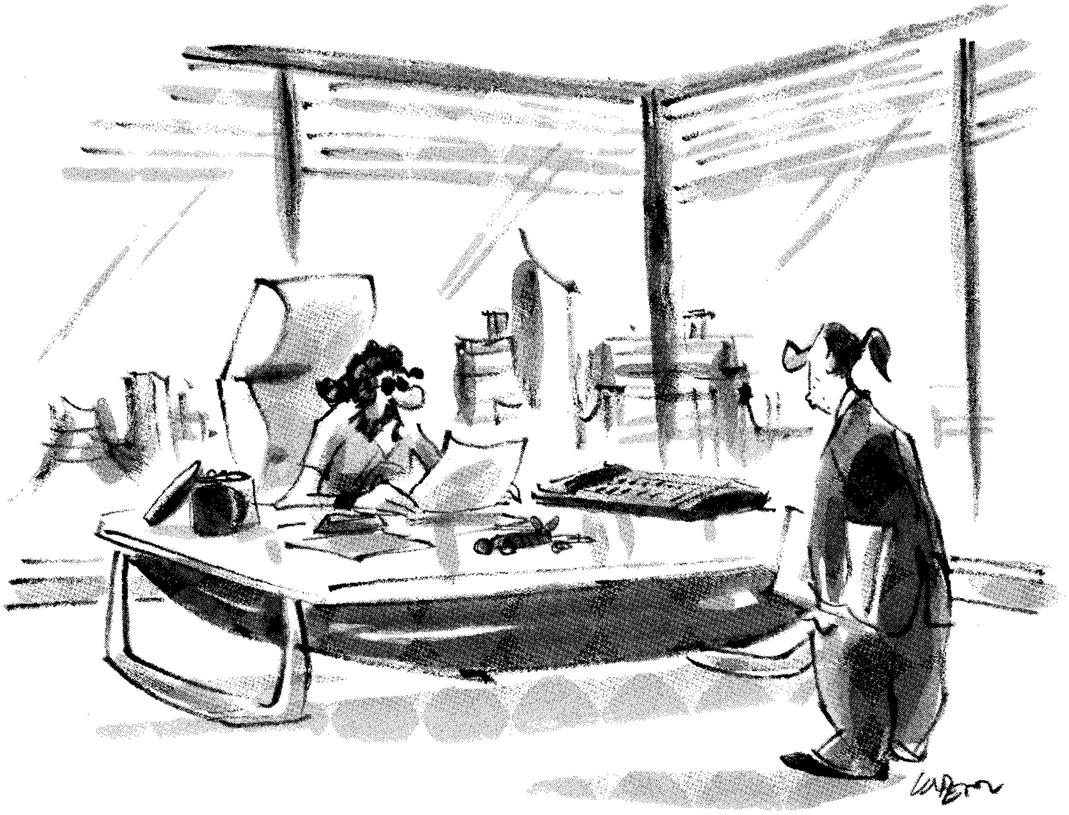
When Audubon had to include more than one bird (a mate or a variant) in a single drawing, he often rejected the conventional compositional system of elegantly varying the poses and places of his subjects. Instead, he repeated a single shape, varying only its size, or "pinning" it down on the background in a new way, as Matisse later did with his fixed shorthand of cutouts. Sometimes this exact repetition of forms can create an odd mixture of geometric abstraction and backwoods lyricism: in the drawing of two violet-green swallows, the same chevron is almost mechanically replicated, so that the echoing shapes, placed beside each other with a chevron of white in between, form an implied fan shape of happy green union. And sometimes the repetition can be comic, as when the little female snakebird thrusts her long throat out in exact imitation of her open-beaked mate, all the while curled safely just beneath him. At other moments—for example, in his drawing of two petrels—Audubon will spin or rotate a fixed schematic shape to show its back or its underside, so that the picture, with a single form rotating across it, is like a stop-action photograph. Yet Audubon's birds always reveal themselves (the undersides of his ducks, the splayed-out bodies of his cocks) without being reduced to specimens.

Audubon's birds were more high-keyed in color than almost any other American art would be until the next century. They were flatter, too, since modelling depends on the kind of slow graying-out of tone that Audubon thought would distract from his precise notation of the birds' true colors. (This flatness was noticed and attacked in his lifetime.) Flatness is in bad odor right now, and it is hard to recall that there was a time when it was an empirical, rather than a metaphysical, issue in American art—a problem of light instead of virtue. In most American abstract painting, flatness produces brightness; in Audubon's art, brightness produced flatness. Audubon had invented an imaginary, unnaturally radiant light of a kind that was not seen again in descriptive art until the photographs of Avedon and Penn in the fifties: the searching, even illumination that fills in detail and casts a staring, blank white light along smooth surfaces—a light at once blinding and particularizing. Sometimes, as with the flamingos and herons, Audubon's light is like light at noon on a white sand beach, picking out each grain of sand, yet still unifying the scene in an all-over, shadowless brightness. Audubon made American light tropical.

EARLIER European bird books had been hierarchical, with the birds lined up by status. Audubon's birds come at us, for the most part, in democratic disorder, and so can be taken only as individuals. We judge them, as Americans are supposed to judge other Americans, by their character. (A Martian coming upon Audubon's birds would have absolutely no notion that birds use feathers for camouflage.) Audubon saw that the behavior of birds, their instinctual code of greetings and seductions, could be recorded as affectations: the heron's dainty, bent-wristed greeting to its fellows; the red-necked grebe sapiently lecturing its child; the great-horned owls staring down their accusers. Mated birds in Audubon are not slaves of instinct but married couples; they are always in cahoots. Or else his birds stand alone in fancy dress and become worldly types: the senatorial pelican, the demagogic shrike, the seigneurial blue heron, the outlaw vulture. Even in his lesser paintings, the birds can be struck off in characterizations of the kind that filled his notebooks as humors: the peevish scaup duck, the proud egret, the suspicious snowy owls, the wise-guy cormorant, the hysterical whooping crane, the serene violet-green swallows. Although Audubon is famous as the first bird painter to show birds in their environments, and eventually began to have various landscape painters—among them Joseph Mason and, later, George Lehman—assist him by painting backgrounds, in his greatest bird pictures his subjects completely dominate the environments. They don't fill a natural niche; they oversee an estate, assuming poses that in European art had been allowed only to the landed gentry standing in their parks, their stately homes off in the distance. It may be that in a democratic culture only things that come by their beauty naturally—birds or models or movie stars—are permitted to be shown with such aristocratic self-importance. Audubon's snowy heron, with its bald head and noble posture, is so large and commanding that it can only be taken as the owner of the Colonial estate in the background.

If Audubon's birds are subjects rather than specimens, they are never merely allegorical or archetypal; their very birdness forbids that. They are, above all, *alive*, and their wildness seems to exist—and to be recorded by him—for its own sake. It burns through in their beady, wide-open, wondering eyes, their thrusting serpentine necks, their chattering mouths—a whole new language of recorded ardor. Audubon's birds are always glamorous and always greedy. His swan is unlike any earlier swan in art—not "graceful" or raising its wings, like the swans he described in the parks in France, but sharp-eyed, grasping, its ugly black-webbed foot propelling its beautiful ivory body forward, its eye on the main chance.

"Does there not exist a high ridge where the mountainside of 'scientific' knowledge joins the opposite slope of 'artistic' imagination?" Vladimir Nabokov, another émigré with a love of American wildlife, asked once about Audubon. (Nabokov didn't think that Audubon's occasional drawings of butterflies walked along that ridge.) But at least in his birds Audubon walked along it more bracingly and with a finer equilibrium than any artist before or since. He sought facts—the exact things, peculiarities—and found them by inventing a style. In Audubon, the patterning impulse and the explanatory impulse were always the same. "What is love?" Robert Penn Warren wrote in his poem about Audubon. "One name for it is knowledge."

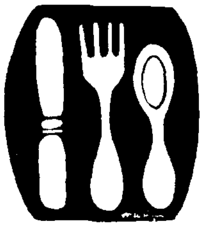


"Wasps are coming back, Dilston. Get us some."

IN 1826, Audubon travelled to Europe, carrying the first set of watercolors for "Birds of America." (He thought that there were not enough potential subscribers in America to pay for the book, and also that there was no one here who could engrave it properly.) Armed only with a few standard letters of introduction, he went first to Liverpool. The bird paintings were an enormous success there, and he went on to Edinburgh, where he found the first of his engravers, W. H. Lizars. Lizars began to produce sample plates using the aquatint process—a tonal printing technique that translated Audubon's drawings into big compositional areas and increased their blocky, Japanese-woodcut quality. Later, Audubon rather callously traded in Lizars for a still better engraver, a Londoner named Robert Havell, who further sharpened the clarity of the watercolors. Looking for an ornithologist who could supply the necessary scientific expertise for the text, Audubon went back to Scotland and eventually found a tough-minded young naturalist named MacGillivray, who wound up editing most of Audubon's writings on birds. Then he went to Paris, and managed to get King Charles X and much of his court to subscribe to "Birds." Audubon understood that while in America it paid him to be very French, in France it paid him to be very American—the noble rustic rather than the rusticated noble. He claimed that when the painter Gérard (an authentic student of David's) saw some of his "Birds," he cried, "Who would have expected such things from the woods of America?" In the salons of Paris, Audubon at last became an American.

"Birds of America" was a multinational effort, and in the end was more European than American—French style and English technique and Scottish realism presiding over the creation of a picture of the New World. For the next decade, while "Birds" was being produced, Audubon spent about as much time in Europe as he did in America. (The last two years of the project, from 1837 to 1839, he spent almost entirely in England, supervising Havell's engravings and writing the last of a series of accompanying essays.) "Birds" appeared between 1827 and 1838, in irregular installments of five plates, along with a series of complementary volumes, the "Ornithological Biography," which was issued between 1831 and 1839. By 1835, Audubon was an international celebrity. He lunched with Presidents, met famous authors, and wrote, "I have laboured like a cart Horse for the last thirty years on a Single Work, have been successful almost to a miracle in its publication so far, and am now thought a-a-a- (I dislike to write it, but no matter, here goes) a Great Naturalist!!!"

He had enemies. Philadelphia, where he had started his American life, was filled with other, more skeptical naturalists, who had an intellectual investment in the Scottish precision and plainness of Alexander Wilson's more drily "scientific" catalogue of birds. They recognized, perceptively, that beneath the illusion of empirical truth in Audubon's work, increasingly surrounded, as it was, by a pious P.R. atmosphere of expedition-making and sample-gathering (at one point Audubon even had a Navy man-of-war take him on a drawing expedition), there lay a not very well concealed element of melodramatic fantasy. One Philadelphian, the naturalist George Ord, mounted a vicious campaign against Audubon, which continued relentlessly for the rest of Ord's life. Audubon's critics attacked the "frenzy and ecstasy" that he showed for his subjects. Fortunately for him, the cases that his critics chose to make an issue of —for instance, whether the nest of the mockingbird could ever actually be invaded by a rattlesnake, as Audubon had shown it to be—were ones on which Audubon happened to have the goods. (It could have turned out differently.)



Audubon shrewdly recognized that the way to cash in on his fame was to release a second, affordable edition of "Birds," and between 1840 and 1844 he published an octavo edition, several times smaller. It sold extremely well; its seven volumes sat on American shelves as a reassuring presence—a kind of museum of a wilderness that was already becoming remote. The octavo edition of "Birds" was one of the books that helped invent America. It is hard to recall how regional all America's ideas of place were until after the Civil War—how rooted in the love of a state, a provincial locality. Although Audubon's birds, of course, belong to particular places, and although the landscape artists he employed tried to show particular locations, Audubon saw America as an idealized whole. The Audubon family had reached across America, travelling from north to south, from New York to Boston to Florida to Ohio, and Audubon's compositions—the unchanging light, and blank, cloudless skies, and long, uninterrupted horizons—are recognizably American without ever being quite situated. This almost mystical idea of Americanness, expressed as a spare, underpopulated thinness, an endless backdrop, begins in Audubon and continues right through to John Ford Westerns and to Georgia O'Keeffe.

Every bird or animal picture book before had tried to make a point beyond the blind, flat empirical record; for Audubon, the enrichment of the empirical record was all the point there was. The French naturalist Buffon's ornithology was structured to mimic the surrounding social order—the noble birds first and the lesser ones behind. Audubon's book begins *in medias res*, with the wild turkey, proceeds to the songbirds, and then abruptly turns to the lyrical swallows, the arctic terns, the water birds. The sequence loosely follows Audubon's own voyages and discoveries as much as any biological program—a kind of autobiography written in birds. He took the French mania for systematization and made it into a recognizably American love of facts for their own sake—single observations connected by "ands."

PICTURES of birds are, like pictures of babies, easy to love. Audubon's beasts—or "Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America," to give them their proper name—have never been as popular as his birds. The only critic to recognize their power and what is in some ways their superiority was Edmund Wilson, who devoted one and a half uncharacteristically rapturous pages to them in "Patriotic Gore," under the chapter heading "Poetry of the War." Perhaps what drew him to Audubon's beasts was their unsentimental realism and their violence. The first bird to appear in "Quadrupeds" is dead—a partridge being mouthed by a fox, which, torn between fear and greed, is staring back at an unseen hunter. The accompanying text that Audubon wrote, in collaboration with the naturalist John Bachman, tells what happens to the fox when the hunter releases his dog:

> The Fox has no time to double and shuffle, the dog is at his heels almost, and speed, speed, is his only hope for life. Now the shrill baying of the hound becomes irregular; we may fancy he is at the throat of his victim . . . every bound and plunge into the snow, diminishes the distance between the fox and his relentless foe. . . . One more desperate leap, and with a sudden snappish growl he turns upon his pursuer. . . . For a moment he resists the dog, but is almost instantly overcome. He is not killed, however, in the first onset; both dog and fox, are so fatigued that they now sit on their haunches facing each other, resting, panting, their tongues hanging out, and the foam from their lips dropping on the snow. After fiercely eyeing each other for a while, both become impatient—the former to seize his prey, and the latter to escape. At the first leap of the fox, the dog is upon him; with renewed vigour he seizes him by the throat, and does not loose his hold until the snow is stained with his blood, and he lies rumpled, draggled, with blood-shot eye, and frothy open mouth, a mangled carcass on the ground.

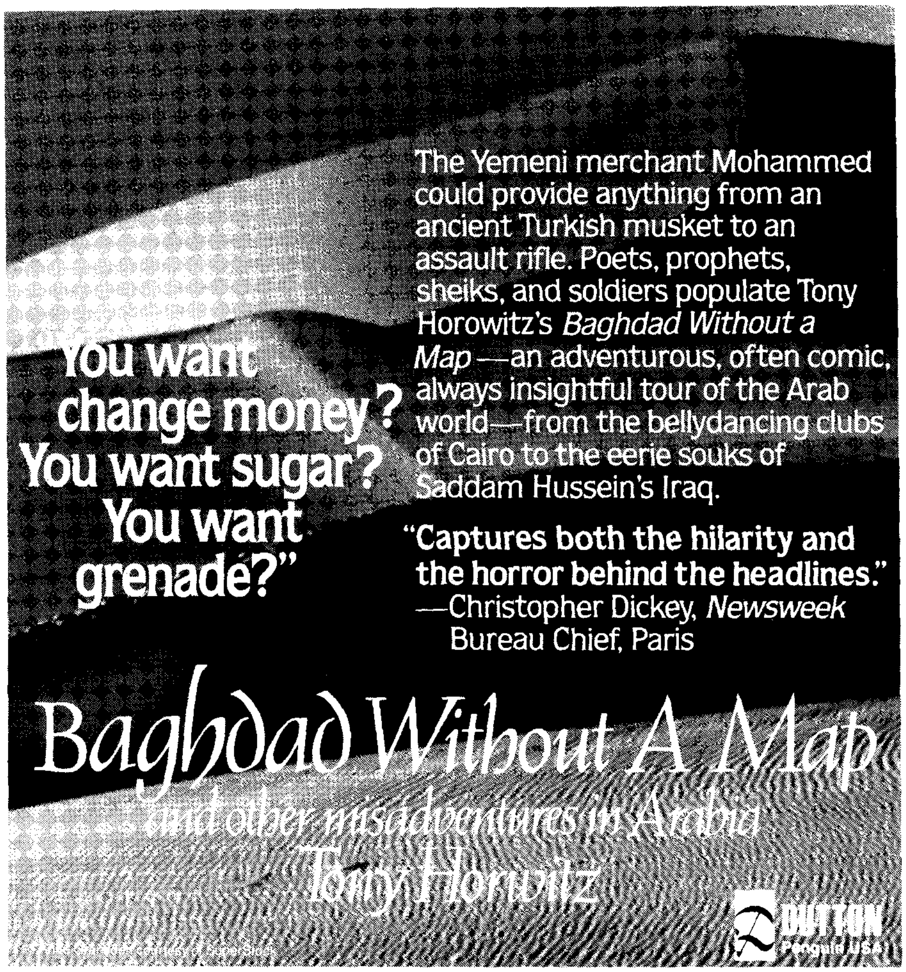
Desperate leaps, panicky darting and plunging, hanging tongues and foaming lips, fierce eyes—these are constants of "Quadrupeds." Violence, seen with a curious equanimity, almost a kind of relish, is the leitmotiv. There are many trapped animals: the red fox with his hind leg caught in a steel jaw, his body turned in an oddly composed and graceful twist of pain; the Canada otter betrayed by his own greed, his small, delicate paw still reaching for the fish after the trap has snapped shut, his mouth turned toward us, screaming in disbelief. (The trapped otter was an obsessive image for Audubon. He first imagined it in the early eighteen-twenties, and drew and painted it many times after.) Other animals scream to create fear: the wolverine, with his wrinkled nose, who stretches open his fanged mouth to intimidate some unseen predator (the prints are filled with unseen predators: noises off); the mink, with its beautiful sleek body and ugly webbed feet, who turns away from his arching mate to howl; the plumed-tail skunk snarling to defend her young hidden in a tree hollow. Instead of using aquatint, Audubon had the beasts printed as lithographs, so that in place of the animated contours of the birds there are soft, blurred edges of fur and microscopically particularized curling hairs. The light in "Quadrupeds" is less intense and even than in "Birds"; it is soft but shadowless, sculpting out breasts and muscular bodies.

In the endless plates of small rodents and moles and shrews, which fill the book, the violence is less explicit, but they have a lurid, horror-movie quality anyway. The common American shrew moles, for example, with their weird, flapping paws and obscene blind faces, seem to be casing the little American farmhouse in the background, like extraterrestrials stalking a schoolyard. Sometimes this same note of panic becomes vaguely comic: Wilson's meadow mice, delicately and improbably separating the high grass on their little hill to peer out for enemies; the marsh hare and his mate looking dolefully away from each other, like an old Beckett couple; the Canada pouched rats, meeting and exchanging battle stories like a team of exhausted football players. Tree animals are allowed almost the only moments of calm: the orange-bellied squirrels meet in the notch of a tree and stare at each other; the wise and fat raccoon looks down from a tree and scratches his head. The movement of the birds is upward: limbs lift, heads turn, beaks point. The mammals move down, in little, burrowing worm shapes.

The violence that marks "Quadrupeds" is also the dominant note of Audubon's wilderness journals, but the slaughter of birds and animals, which is the theme of the journals, has, in retrospect, a justification in Audubon's work: the birds and beasts bought with their deaths immortality for their kind. "On leaving the wood we shot a Spruce Partridge leading her young," he writes. "On seeing us she ruffled her feathers like a barnyard hen, and rounded within a few feet of us to defend her brood; her very looks claimed our forbearance and clemency, but the enthusiastic desire to study nature prompted me to destroy her, and she was shot, and her brood secured." The relentlessness of Audubon's descriptions of his slaughters and the almost giddy excitement that the killing inspires in him lend an underside to his accounts which is genuinely alien to modern sensibilities; sometimes the journals have an almost drunken violence, and read like an ad for the National Rifle Association: "Next, Sprague shot an adult yellow-winged male, with the markings principally such as are found in the Eastern States. Harris then shot a young Red-shafted, just fledged, with a black stripe on the cheek. His next shot was a light-colored Red-shafted male, with black cheeks, and another still, a yellow Red-shafted with a red cheek. After all this Mr. Culbertson proposed to run a sham Buffalo hunt again. He, Harris, and Squires started on good horses, went about a mile, and returned full tilt, firing and cracking. Squires fired four times and missed once. Harris did not shoot at all; but Mr. Culbertson fired eleven times, starting at the onset with an empty gun, snapped three times, and reached the fort with his gun loaded."

Audubon threw himself into "Quadrupeds" with a passion that surprised even his family. But he fell ill when the book was about half completed; contemporary accounts of the illness sound like a clinical description of the progression of Alzheimer's disease. He became "crabbed, uncontrollable," demanded kisses, and called for old French songs. At the end of his life, he fell into a silent reverie, and was roused only once, when an old friend came to visit, and Audubon suddenly called out, "Yes, yes, Billy! You go down that side of Long Pond, and I'll go this side, and we'll get the ducks."

AUDUBON was buried in Manhattan; there is a monument to him in Trinity Church Cemetery, on 155th Street. In the hundred and forty years since his death, many of his admirers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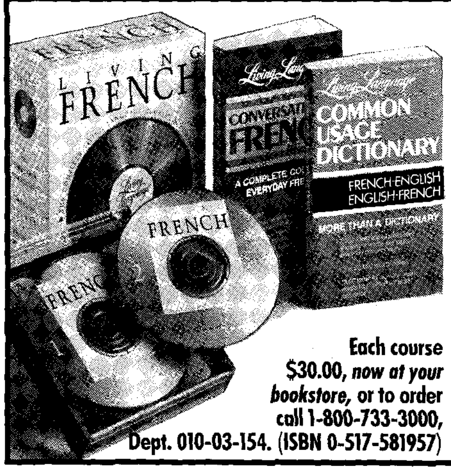
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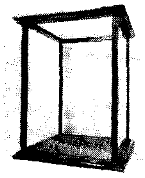
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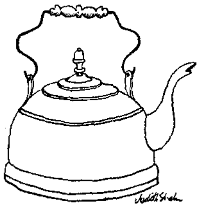
have tried to translate his example into a conservation program. (The details of this translation, and all its accomplishments, are related in Frank Graham, Jr.,'s new book about the National Audubon Society, "The Audubon Ark," published by Knopf.) Yet the more time one spends in Audubon's company the more certain it seems that the mission of the society that bears his name—to protect birds and other wildlife—would not have stirred him much. Today, it seems, we can see wild creatures only as waifs or wards; Audubon's wild creatures are always sure of themselves—are never appealing to or looking for a protector. He loved them because they were not needy. It's hard to imagine Audubon within the Audubon Society: once his subjects had to be protected, the splendor that drew him to them in the first place would be gone.



But if Audubon is a relic as a "scientific" naturalist, as a naturalist in the other, literary sense he is still alive. He was the first American artist to look at abundance and see isolation. His animals do not belong to a large "ecology" or have a rank within a secure hierarchy. Instead, their life is lived in a constant present, in which they are always watchful. The only respite comes when an animal is with its mate. Audubon is a poet of married life, who pictures twoness as mutual protection, a midpoint around which a hostile world revolves. His pictures of mated animals can have a horrible delicacy, as in the wonderful plate of two black vultures cuddled within each other's wings and about to peck out and share the eye of a dead deer, or in the plate of a barn owl coming home on a starry winter night, climbing up a branch and opening his beak with delight as his mate turns her head coquettishly, and lifts her snowy-white wing to reveal the hanging squirrel they will share for dinner.

Audubon's passion produced a style by transforming his extravagances into a chastened, dispassionate-seeming language of hard facts, through which the original ardor still shines. The outward sign that his ardor settled on was simply stylized movement; it seems right that George Balanchine thought that Audubon's art could be the subject of a ballet—for forty years, he and Lincoln Kirstein planned to collaborate on a "Birds of America" ballet. (A score exists, by Morton Gould, and bits and pieces of the plan can be reconstructed from accounts by Balanchine's biographer.) The ballet would have turned on the Dauphin legend: the rightful king wandering in America and creating a court of birds. In the third act, apparently, the scene would have leaped ahead to Hollywood in the thirties, with an eternal Audubon transferring his attentions from the white egret to the platinum blonde. Balanchine's Audubon might have fixed forever one image of Audubon, that of the émigré classicist, lost in America.

It also makes sense, though, that in the end Balanchine decided to leave the Audubon ballet alone. Perhaps he recognized that there was nothing much to reinterpret. The constant animation that Audubon imposed on his creations, and that to his contemporaries could look so unnatural, has come to seem at the end of his two volumes as beautifully contrived as ballet, and has the same equanimity. In Audubon's world, as in classical dancing, heightened action of any kind—struggle, escape, seduction, threat, violent death—becomes an opportunity for grace: "And speed, speed, is his only hope for life." Attempting to fix each animal as his imagination grasped it, Audubon ended up painting a catalogue of five hundred and eighty-five aspects of what is still an American theme: that natural life is lived in fear, ruled by habit, and relieved by flight.

—ADAM GOPNIK

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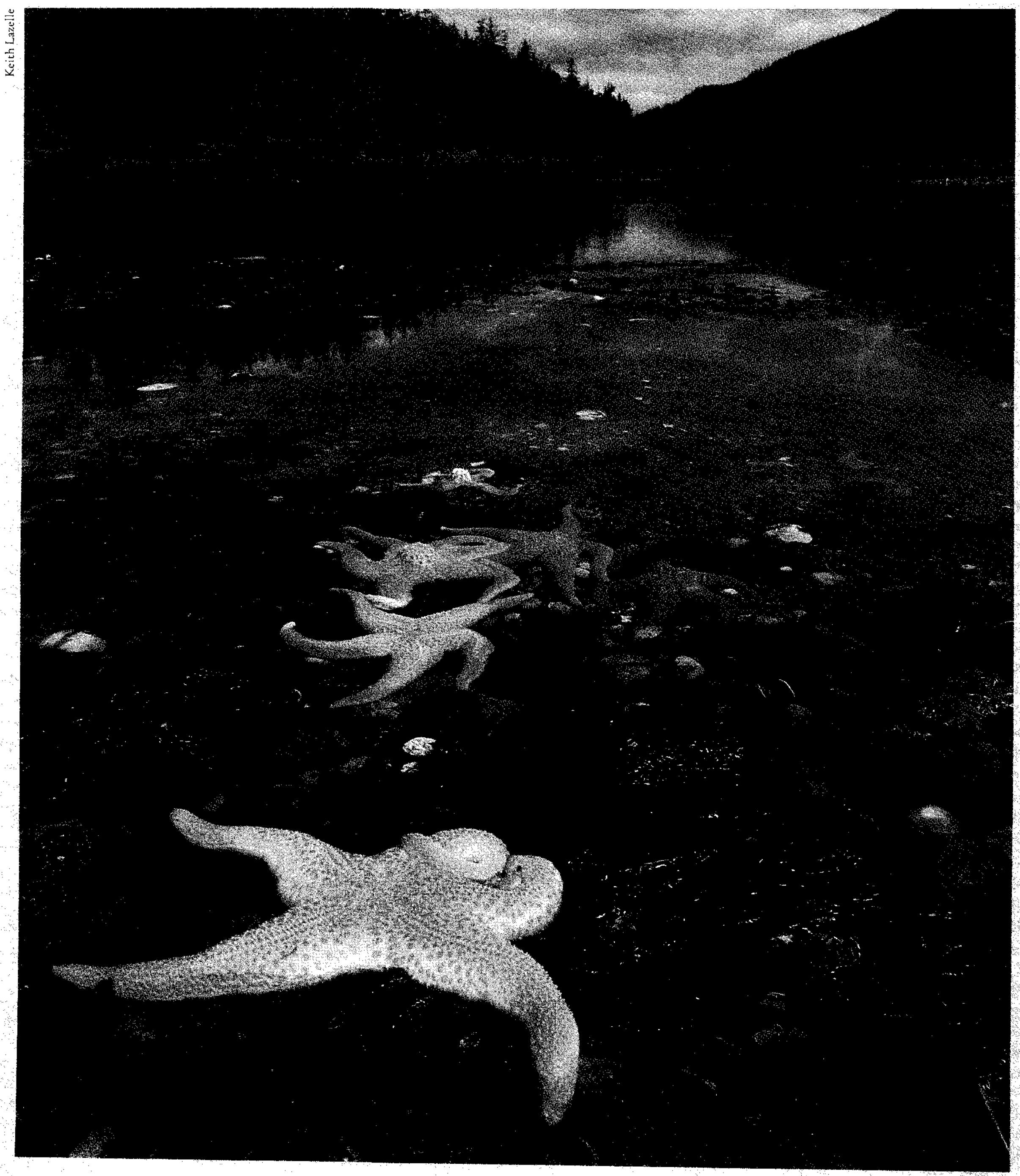
—*Flyer at an Indonesian restaurant in San Rafael, Calif.*

Thanks, but we never did care very much for meat loaf.

Keith Lazelle



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